







# MOHAMMAD

## THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

HIS MARVELLOUS LIFE & CAREER RENDERED INTO VERSE

MOHAMMAD ALI AL-HAJ SALMIN,

B. Litt. (LOND.)

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## **BY THE SAME AUTHOR**

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THE HOLY PROPHET MOHAMMAD :  
Through Different Lights.

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ALI: The Caliph.

FATIMAH: The Lady of the Light.

IMAM HASAN :  
The Chief of the Youth of Paradise.

IMAM HUSAIN: The Greatest World-Martyr

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF  
IMAM HUSAIN'S MARTYRDOM.

---

BUDDHA: The Great.

---

SAYYIDAH ZAINAB.

Etc.





MAHOMED ALLY TASHBOY VAHARVATY.

THIS BOOK IS MOST RESPECTFULLY  
DEDICATED

TO

MY ELDERLY BROTHER-IN-ISLAM  
**MAHOMEDALLY TAJBHOY VAHANVATY.**  
FOR HIS DEEP REVERENCE TOWARDS  
HOLY PROPHET MOHAMMAD AND HIS  
WORTHY DESCENDANTS.

—The Author.

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## ERRATA.

Page No.	Line No	Wrong	Right
20	10	Stop	Stoop
35	2	him	Him
43	10	reared	neared
"	11	Musims	Muslims
56	2	<i>omitted</i>	hand
"	3	<i>All omitted</i>	Nor did O m a r and Hamza delay their parts to execute.
72	19	Wae	Was
78	8	he	The
80	11	Showed	Sowed
"	17	return	Return

## PREFACE

This offering represents my first compilation in English verses having been inspired for years together by the lofty character and fascinating personality of the Holy Prophet MOHAMMAD (on whom be peace of Allah) who was not only sent to the contemporary Arabs, but according to the Holy Quran and Prophet's saying was sent even as guide, warner, blessing and mercy to all the nations of the world.

I do admit here that I am not a poet in the strict sense of the term. May be, this humble but sincere attempt on my part to compile these verses is not entirely devoid of errors--technical or otherwise but all the same these lines have emanated from very deep reverence and admiration I feel for the noblest soul the world ever witnessed.

As for the main aspects of the contents of this little book, I have not spared any pains in consulting the most authentic sources, and quite consistant with my practice followed in my previous publications, both old and new historic books conforming the beliefs of all the so-called sections in Islam have been carefully envisaged. Naturally, the book is an honest, sincere and vigilant outcome of years of contemplation on the Prophet's life in poetry, and that, too, in an alien language. Needless to add, therefore, that all suggestions for improvement from any literary friend or reader will not only be welcome, but will also be taken in due consideration when printing, if so Allah wills, the second edition of this book.

Never-the-less my heartfelt thanks are due to some noble souls who were good enough in enabling me to publish this book. Allah alone will reward them all.

Mahboob Manzil,  
Palton Road,  
Fort, BOMBAY.

*The Author.*



"When the West was sunk in darkness, a bright star rose in the Eastern firmament and gave light and comfort to a groaning world. Islam is not a false religion. Let Hindus study it reverently and they will love it even as I do."

**-Mr. Gandhi**

"I become more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and his own mission."

**- Mr. Gandhi**



M. A. Al-Haj Salmin.  
(Missionary, Author & Journalist)



## Chapter I

### BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD.

Arabia's Holy Prophet Great,  
( E'er peace and blessings on him wait ! )  
Who came of noble family,  
The Hashims of proud pedigree,  
Was born to Amina the good ;  
Was born to bring true brotherhood  
On earth, withal true creed of God  
For man, who on corruptions trod.  
About the Prophet's birth, 'tis said,  
Amina was informed ahead.  
And clearly marked his birth was sure,  
That did his Prophethood assure ;  
Rainfall there fell quite plentiful ;  
Good sign of plenty beautiful ;  
Minarets of Cyrus palace,  
Fourteen of them, fell from their place;  
The flame went out in the Persian shrine,  
Stream Sadah was dried up in fine.

Arabia's aristocracy,  
Their children sent in infancy,  
Among the desert dwellers hard;  
There nursed and brought<sup>d</sup> up well, each ward  
Went back 'gain to his parents' care,  
Imbibing full the desert air,

Courageous, hale, hardened, and free,  
Below the blue, vast canopy.

The Prophet was entrusted hence,  
With one Halima called; immense  
Surprised became the Bedouins,  
Beholding striking marvels, since  
The day of his arrival there.  
Bewilderment spread ev'rywhere;  
They could not guess aright the ground  
For those strange lights and sights, around  
That innocent and charming thing.  
The nurse to Mecca back did bring  
The babe, therefore, to hand him o'er  
To Amina; but four years more  
He was destined to be with her,  
As plague the place did bad bother.  
Well nurtured 'midst surroundings such,  
His future life was influenced much;  
Nature's, sublime, Divine, withal  
Most mighty charms, did not then fall  
In him in vain; the mystery,  
Behind, grew in him gradually.

The Prohet was a posthumous child;  
He from the desert dwelling wild,  
Back to his mother's care went due;  
But soon alas! he lost her too,  
Good Abdulla also passed away,

His grandsire beloved and grey ;  
While only summers six he was,  
He thus became an orphan lass.  
This holy child, so early left  
So helplessly, was not bereft  
Complete, beyond a ray of hope ;  
Is there no light for those who grope  
In darkness pitch ? Sure there was one  
At least, for him, and he was none  
Else than his uncle good and kind ;  
In Abu Talib he did find  
The badly needed guardian,  
The Heavenly given saviour then.

Attachment deep and strong soon grew,  
Between Talib and his nephew ;  
And to such an extent it went,  
That loneliness e'en a moment,  
Seemed killing to the uncle most ;  
This is bare truth, and not a boast.  
Young Muhammad's behaviour,  
Towards his uncle kind and dear,  
No less deserved the highest praise,  
With his good, noble, ideal ways.  
In brief, there gleamed thro' his childhood,  
Those glorious days of Prophethood.

## Chapter II

### YOUTH AND MARRIAGE.

Complete devoid of childishness,  
Of children's usual playfulness,  
Though he in harmless sports partook,  
At times, he worthless ways forsook  
E'en as a child ; he now a youth  
Became, more solemn bent, in sooth.  
He meditative grew the more,  
In him but seriousness he bore.

The Prophet's youth was crystal pure,  
Beyond reproach so spotless sure ;  
When stinking vices of all kinds,  
Degraded most the Meccan minds,  
When gambling, women, wine, and wars,  
Left in their lives the blackest scars,  
By Allah blessed, our hero trod  
The righteous path, which all applaud.  
The lotus, born 'midst mud, doth glow  
Yet clean ; the Prophet pure was so.  
Let all young men a lesson take  
From him, life beautiful to make.

To all Meccans he was well known  
As Al-Amin ; for, they did own

His good trait of trustworthiness,  
 His fair dealings and righteousness.  
 Hence with him they entrusted their  
 Things valuable, without least care;  
 To such a man must come success,  
 Who was full of inborn goodness.  
 Who will not like this noble son ?  
 The noble uncle's heart was won.  
 He helped Talib in business all,  
 Accompanying him withal,  
 In his commercial journeys e'er,  
 Who never did without him stir.

Of one such travel let me tell,  
 When Abu Talib went to sell  
 To Syria his merchandise;  
 Sure with him was his nephew wise.  
 Well-nigh had reached the caravan,  
 The outskirts of Syria then;  
 Unloading things, that afternoon,  
 The men had taken shelter soon,  
 Just down the shades of a high hill,  
 As further they must travel still;  
 And long and weary was their way,  
 Thro' desert sands for many a day.

From his monastery above  
 The peak, the Christian monk somehow,



A while ago, had seen a sight  
So strange, that flashed in him a light,  
Concerning a great Prophet's birth,  
Who comfort was to bring on earth.  
For as the caravan afar  
Was coming up, a cloud did bar  
The sun's heat scorching most, and so  
The Prophet wondrous guarding, slow  
Did move along above his head ;  
The monk thought of what he had read.  
So, he, that day a dinner gave,  
To Abu Talib's men, and save  
Young Muhammad, all were present ;  
He was left lone inside the tent.  
The monk asked for this missing one,  
There soon was brought that noble son ;  
Then Bahira, the Christian priest,  
Was pleased, well cleared of doubts the least.  
He due made known the uncle there  
Of this ; asked him to have a care  
Of him, who was of blessed birth,  
Who was to lead mankind on earth.  
And it was even so indeed ;  
For worldly life he least did heed ;  
Distracted worst, displeased of what  
He saw around, he frequent sought  
Those lonely spots and caves all dark.  
Immersed in solemn moods, to hark

One day Allah's great message true,  
He prayed and pined days not a few.

He spent this way his days of youth,  
Adorned with traits the best in sooth ;  
Though, like the rest, illiterate,  
He reached true wisdom's highest state.  
'Midst trade, he meditated oft,  
Flew oft on subtlest wings aloft ;  
Arabia had not one like him,  
Who brightly shone 'midst all the dim.  
His goodness born, integrity,  
His many a great quality,  
Khadija, merchant princess, pure  
And good like him, did strong allure.

With personality so meet,  
He reached his twenty-five complete ;  
He travelled now to Syria,  
To sell the wares of Khadija;  
He soon returned with profits such,  
That widow good was pleased so much,  
That she him wedded willingly,  
Voluntarily and joyfully,  
When lot of suitors blinking stood  
Befooled, without a likelihood.  
And happy most this marriage proved,  
His solemn life remained unmoved;  
What though she was then forty past ?

She lived devoted to the last,  
Glad giving all her wealth and worth  
To him, glad serving him on earth.  
She of the Prophet's goodness knew,  
Worked faithful for his greatness due,  
Him calmed, and soothed, and comforted,  
When he to her oft baffled fled.  
How like an angel good she glowed !  
How much the Prophet to her owed !

### Chapter III

#### THE BLACK STONE<sup>1</sup> INCIDENT.

During the Prophet's youthful days,  
An incident of note took place,  
In which he played a worthy part,  
That sheweth well a harmless heart,  
In search of peace and amity,  
Averting great calamity,  
And bringing back true happiness,  
Thro' timely good resourcefulness.

The Kaba shrine repair needed  
A bit, and that Black Stone hallowed,  
Of hoary make, must be again  
Put back in its place proper then.  
But who was privileged that stone  
To place? And there began the bone  
Of worst contentions, factions keen,  
E'er threatening an awkward scene.

Now from an old man came a shrewd  
Suggestion, putting all in peaceful mood;  
He who entered the sacred shrine  
The morning next, must be, in fine,  
Allowed to lay the stone; and lo!  
The Prophet chanced to enter so.  
They hailed with boundless joy and zest,

The Prophet just, of men the best;  
He was their proud son, Al-Amin,  
The trustworthy; was born to win.  
How wisely he performed his part,  
Who sure possessed true wisdom's heart !

The stone upon a sheet he placed,  
And to its place thence it was raised  
By all; one from each clan did hold  
The sacred corners of the fold.  
Though he was asked to lay the stone,  
He himself did not care to own  
Alone, the glory of the task,  
But wisely, so, each clan did ask,  
To hold the four ends of the sheet;  
It was praiseworthy most and meet.  
None was wounded, all were content;  
This to his name more lustre lent.

## Chapter IV

## THE CALL DIVINE.

Striking traits in him did vie;  
Noble, Chaste, and truthful high,  
Was the Prophet's youthful life,  
'Midst that land of hopeless strife;  
Doubtless stainless, crystal clean,  
Was that beaming, beautiful mien,  
And Bahira spoke the truth,  
Of the greatness of the youth.

Deeply moved by Mecca's ways,  
Immorality so base,  
Oft in contemplative mood,  
He bewildered, baffled stood,  
Seeking solemn loneliness,  
And not worldly happiness;  
In that wicked Arab land,  
Lotus-like he pure did stand.

And Khadija equal pure,  
Noble, good, and rich, was sure  
Worthy, fitting mate to him,  
In that time of darkness dim,  
Of perplexing agony;  
She, a heaven-sent harmony,  
Added glow and glory more,

Gladly all those burdens bore.  
Now, more contemplative still  
Grew that soul of stronger will;  
And Khadija new his ways,  
That were not for conjugal days;  
Off he tore from homely bliss,  
Solitude he could not miss;  
Often Hira Mount he sought,  
From its cave he thought a lot.

At a stretch for days and nights,  
He often meditation's heights,  
Thro' steps mental, beautiful,  
By forgetting free and full,  
Worthless bodily deeds and needs,  
( Then of those the soul least heeds )  
Reached triumphant, ecstatic,  
Far above the world so sick.

Of the how and why of things,  
Of life's divers bitter stings,  
Of this world and of the next,  
Told in many a holy text,  
Of the stinking vices seen,  
Of life aimless, shameless mean,  
He, there pondering, wandered oft  
High, where all were calm and soft.

Thus reflecting, communing e'er,  
Concentrated, without a stir,

Merging in the infinite,  
 In that wondrous indefinite,  
 In that harmony divine,  
 Where His glorious light doth shine,  
 Visions thrilling he could see,  
 Rarest, highest ecstasy.

There he sate one ev'ning calm;  
 Then the sun was shining warm;  
 Lo ! Soon darkness solemn came;  
 Twinkling stars did right proclaim,  
 What a heav'nly night it was,  
 They in darkness brighter glass.

So complete wrapped up in dream,  
 In unconsciousness supreme,  
 Far beyond all light and shade,     ✠  
 In that hallowed spot he prayed,  
 Until dawn emerging slow,  
 With a flood of silver glow,  
 Filled the place around in full;  
 'Tis a scene true beautiful !

From his trance he trembl'ing woke,  
 As a voice Divine thus spoke :  
 " Thou art the Man,  
 Thou art the Prophet of Allah. "  
 So, he was to show the way,  
 Crowned with Prophethood that day.



**Chapter V****THE QURAISH PERSECUTIONS.**

Islam in its tender stage  
Had to face the Quraish rage,  
Persecutions foul and full,  
With its faithful but handful.

Harrowing and heart-rending,  
Blood-chilling and blood-curdling,  
Were its days of sufferings,  
Worse than piercing scorpion stings.

Great and small, glad shared the woes,  
And to slaves and women owes  
Islam much; unflinching e'er,  
And devoted was each follower.

Sire ill-treated his own son,  
Whom the Prophet's faith had won,  
Him belabouring pitiless,  
Torturing quite merciless.

There, they lay, those martyr band,  
On Arabia's burning sand,  
Scorched and choked with boulders big  
On their breasts, yet cared a fig.

Persecutions even worse,  
But the Quraish did repulse,

Since the Faithful few, but brave,  
All forsook Islam to save.

Some were branded bad with iron  
Hot; still, they were true and stern;  
Though immersed in water deep,  
They for life did never weep.

Even women were not spared,  
Who their faith fearless declared;  
Them the Quraish callously  
Beat and killed, with barbarous glee.

They jeered at those gentle men,  
Who the Prophet followed then;  
They dragged them the streets along;  
On them spat the pitiless throng.

They did not least hesitate  
To fling at the Prophet great,  
Persecutions' weapons keen;  
O what a pathetic scene !

Once he was in prayer deep;  
Upon him a foe did sweep,  
Throwing round his neck a sheet;  
Action wicked, most discreet.

Down the Prophet fell well-nigh;  
Abu Bakr passing by

Luckily, rebuked the man  
Well, for his high-handed plan.

Abu Jahl, the wickedest,  
Equally behaved the worst;  
All rubbish were at him flung,  
Dirt, intestines, stones, and dung.  
When one day he reached home just,  
With his head covered with dust,  
Fatima shed tears of grief;  
His wise words gave her relief.

“ Weep not thus, my daughter dear;  
When there's Allah's help, why fear ? ”  
See at Taif how he was dealt !  
For the foe, his heart did melt.

He was unwilling to shed  
E'en a drop of precious blood;  
But persistent were the foe;  
Persecuting wars did grow.

Why, the Prophet's family  
Whole, was punished cruelly,  
By the callous Quraish chiefs,  
Casting all in gruesome griefs.

Ostracised so merciless,  
Lonely, friendless, in distress  
Sunk entire, and suff'ring sore,  
These, the Hashims nobly bore.

Struggling hard throughout his life,  
Holding on throughout the strife,  
Thro' these persecutions glows  
One, who faced the Quraish foes.

Peace and blessings be on them !  
And on him, most precious gem,  
Peerless Personality !  
Man for all humanity !

Islam was by suff'rings built,  
Not thro' swords and wars of guilt;  
Sure it is Allah's true creed,  
Doubtless born of purest deed.

## Chapter VI

## EMIGRATION TO ABYSSINIA.

How could the Prophet bear to see  
Before his very eyes, his followers,  
Those precious, handful of brothers,  
Thus persecuted pitilessly ?  
Sore burnt and broken was his heart;  
His men were beaten, burnt, and choked,  
Quite merciless, though unprovoked;  
The Meccans played their cruellest part.

And so he must find out a place,  
Far from such persecutions mad,  
Free from these endless tortures sad,  
Lest worst would be the future days,  
Migration to the Christian State,  
Called Abyssinia, was hence  
The Prophet's counsel wise, at once  
To leave Mecca before too late  
It might be e'en for that; with glee,  
Those few, but faithful Allah's band  
Of brethren dear, left for that land,  
Without delay accordingly.  
For hospitality far famed  
It was, a land where none was wronged,  
Which to a Christian king belonged,

Who justice showed, King Negus named.  
 The wicked Quraish enemy  
 Did not to them e'en there allow  
 The least respite or peace; for now  
 They saw how there spread rapidly  
 Beyond their own Arabic State,  
 Within that kind though Christian land,  
 The new faith of the Muslim band;  
 And all the more them they did hate,  
 It may be noted here, that 'mong  
 The exiles many wealthy were  
 And noble too; yet, they did stir  
 Outside, by persecutions stung.

The Quraish now were keen the more  
 To get back those brave Muslim men,  
 To get all of them banished then  
 And there, from Abyssinia's shore.  
 They formed a deputation strong,  
 To represent this matter grave,  
 Before that King who shelter gave;  
 With hope they Mecca left ere long.  
 They took with them gifts valuable  
 And handsome most; for, those oft gain  
 Success where fail all arguments vain;  
 And, of course, more reliable.  
 By falsely representing to  
 The priestly class ( Who in their turn

Would make the Christian King thence learn  
 Their views,) about the Muslims few,  
 Who were safe refuge given there;  
 The Meccan delegates thought of  
 Attaining thus their aim, to see sent off  
 The exiles back to Mecca's care.  
 They prejudiced the priestly group  
 'Gainst the fugitives as said,  
 By telling them that those who fled  
 Were infidels, who dared to stop  
 To bold abjure just for a trash  
 Their ancient faith, who did evince  
 But hatred 'gainst Jesus' doctrines;  
 They hence deserved punishment harsh.

The King sent for the Prophet's men,  
 Who soon before his Council stood,  
 Before his Bishops grave in mood;  
 To them quoth he: "Now I can't ken  
 What is this curious cult of yours,  
 Which looketh not like that of mine,  
 Nor like another one, in fine,  
 Which so all of you strong allures,  
 Far, far, away from people own  
 And creed of old"; then Jafar bold,  
 The spokesman of the party, told  
 The King the following in pleasing tone.  
 "We were quite an ignorant lot

Once, ere we the Prophet got  
To guide us thro' that path true,  
Straight, and righteous, in due  
Course; we were steeped deep and full  
In corruptions most harmful,  
In idolatry so base,  
With a life of shameless ways.  
Carrions foul we gladly ate;  
We did each the other hate;  
Frequent hence were wars and feuds,  
Merciless fought in barbarous moods;  
Bloodshed was our common play,  
Swords unsheathed flashed gay all day;  
Wine and women filled the gap,  
Clean devoid of moral sap;  
Daughters we buried alive;  
Can crime be more excessive ?

When such was out wretched state,  
There arose a Prophet great,  
Good, and spotless pure, 'midst us,  
Who complete reformed us thus.  
He is of noble clan,  
High trustworthy gentleman,  
Al-Amin, he is by fame,  
Muhammad is though his name.  
To the worship of one God,  
Who for all the only Lord,



Truely is, he showed the way,  
Since futile was it to pray,  
As he but too clearly proved,  
To mere stones that stood unmoved.  
He taught us neighbourliness,  
Of its lasting loveliness,  
Of regard to kith and kin,  
For, all are, in truth, akin.  
He then spoke of purity,  
Truthfulness, integrity,  
And of trust in dealings all;  
All our vicious ways withal,  
Our feuds bloody, barbarous,  
He condemned most serious.  
From degraded condition  
To the highest position  
Were thro' him our women raised;  
Thus, he ev'ry-thing replaced.  
Deep impressed by these teachings,  
Hallowed, grand, high-pitched preachings,  
Him we followed faithfully,  
Trusting him, who beautifully  
Brought us to the worthy way;  
Then began that tragic play.  
We were persecuted most  
Merciless, and we did boast  
But of Allah's greatness, though  
Tortured still worse by our foe,

Who were bent upon to force  
Us back to their cult quite coarse;  
So, they are e'en here; and we,  
Too, are here, as you may see,  
Needing good protection bad  
From such persecutions mad."

Then from th' Quran did Jafar read  
The sweet Sura of Maryam;  
The King and Bishops could not stem  
The tears that trickled down indeed.  
Their hearts were won outright, the King  
Consoled the Muslims thus: "In peace  
And safety go, and none shall tease  
You any more; the foe did wring  
Their hands and bite their lips in ire,  
At this unexpected defeat;  
It was a disappointment meet,  
Though vanquished, they did not retire.  
But futile was their efforts all;  
The King was doubtless satisfied,  
And Islam's cause was glorified;  
High wickedness had its downfall.

---

## Chapter VII

## THE PROPHET'S JOURNEY TO TAIF.

The Prophet to the town of Taif,  
That lay from Mecca forty miles,  
Went for relief he needed sore,  
From persecutions' vexing wiles.

There teased and tried and treated worst,  
To suff'rings bear it seemed his lot;  
'Twas from the frying pan into  
The fire; his preachings came to nought.

With his devoted Zaid he went,  
And he there brothers three approached,  
Who were of noble family;  
They helped him not, but him reproached.

They downright disappointed him,  
And paid least heed to what he said;  
Undaunted was that hero still,  
Who hopeful ten days' life there led.

He preached at Taif Allah's Message,  
To people who were deaf to hear;  
It was but throwing pearls before  
The swine; they had no faith or fear.

Refused a hearing even bare,  
Rebuked, reviled, and ridiculed,

He despaired not, but patient hoped,  
Though thus he was by all befooled.

They taunted him by telling, that  
He first about his teachings must  
His Meccan people own convince;  
See how extreme unkind, unjust !

Inhospitable most were they,  
Who handled him so awkwardly;  
They pelted him with sharpest stones,  
And made him walk quite mercilessly.

“ Walk on, for, this is not the place  
For you to rest; ” thus telling plain,  
They made him walk again, with legs  
And feet that bled profuse with pain.

That stainless, sacred, innocent soul,  
With wounded, bleeding, aching heart  
And legs withal, did himself drag  
Three dreary miles;--a piteous part !

’Midst soulless foes, devoid of help,  
Imagine just the Prophet’s plight,  
A lamp ’mong hungry jackals wild !  
He was, e’en then, full buoyant and bright.

He showed no signs of helplessness,  
And neither was he desperate;

He blamed not Him, nor did bemoan,  
But gently prayed to Allah great.

“ O my God, Most Merciful !  
Thou Lord of the weak and meek,  
Who from Thee protection seek !  
Of my hardships I heed not;  
But to Thee of my weakness,  
That lack of resourcefulness,  
I complain, disabling me  
From surmounting difficulties,  
Which do ev’ry day increase;  
How is it that Thou hast me  
Handed O’er to bitter foes,  
When there are for me friends close,  
Who my affairs know full well ?  
Save thine succour unfailing,  
I least care for anything;  
I but shelter humble seek,  
In Thy Beam Divine, That Light,  
Glowing in Thy face so bright,  
That illumining the world,  
Doth dispel all darkness deep,  
And all ignorance’s heap,  
Filling all with light and life.  
Let me not Thine displeasure  
Least incur; Thine wrath I fear

Most; all strength and power down here,  
Sure thro' Thee alone must come."

Reflect upon this prayer deep,  
Outpourings of a flawless heart,  
So cultured high, polished withal,  
Melting, sublime, it stands apart.

Such fortitude, so utmost tried  
And taxed, with faith unshakeable,  
Devoid of curse, revenge, and spite,  
Can but be love ineffable.

In sooth, true love and mercy reached  
In him their highest magnitude;  
"They are an ignorant lot," said he,  
Light of a million multitude.

Thus solemn praying to Allah,  
Wearied, wounded, he, inside  
A good man's garden went for rest;  
A slave with grapes soon stood beside.

Utba, the garden owner kind,  
Took pity on the Prophet great;  
So thro' his slave he sent the grapes;  
May Allah's blessings on him wait !

And " In the name of Allah ", were  
The Prophet's pregnant words, as he

Stretched out his hand to get the grapes;  
The slave heard these amazingly.

The Truth and beauty of Islam,  
Now thro' the Prophet's talk he knew;  
He on the spot embraced that faith,  
As he was of the fearless few.

In gentle Utba and his slave,  
The Prophet saw God's guiding Hand;  
In utter helplessness at Taif,  
His greatness radiated grand.

## Chapter VIII

## THE PROPHET'S ASCENSION.

Glorious, glowing tenfold bright,  
Was that sacred, solemn night,  
And rare brilliant shone the moon,  
Brigther, too, the stars were soon;  
Deep in slumber undisturbed,  
In that rest complete enwrapped,  
Lay our Prophet dear, a soul  
Spotless pure, who knew the goal.

Then the angel, Gabriel,  
To that hoary, hallowed well,  
Called Zam Zam, of crystal clear,  
Water pure, the Prophet there  
Swiftly took, and washed his heart,  
Opening the chest apart;  
Afterwards the angel brought  
Al Buraq, a curious sort  
Of a beast that was a bird  
Strange withal, on earth unheard,  
For the Prophet's trip to Heaven,  
Thro' space vast by none trodden.

Flapping wings, with flashing speed,  
Up and up, that heavenly breed  
Wondrous flew thro' pathless track,



With the Prophet on it back.  
 Mounted on that bird-like beast,  
 Sure a glorious vision's feast,  
 Came the Prophet rapid down  
 To famed Jerusalem town,  
 Leaving but a while ago,  
 Mecca's temple all aglow.

He alighting, saw the same  
 Angel, who before him came,  
 Holding in his hand two bowls;  
 Wine that always sparkling rolls,  
 Milk that's sweet and virtuous,  
 Were in each; not anxious  
 Least was he for th' luring cup,  
 But the milk he glad did sup.  
 At this action praiseworthy,  
 Quoth that angel joyously:  
 "If thou hadst preferred but wine  
 To the nectar of the kine,  
 Error would have been the choice  
 Of thine men, not truth's dear voice."

Jerusalem's famous place,  
 Hallowed mosque of hoary days,  
 Next our Prophet visited;  
 And that rock, there situated  
 In that City's harem famed,  
 Sacred spot, and Sukhra named

Thence led by that Angel great,  
 He 'gain on the Buraq sate,  
 And quick dashed up skyward fresh;  
 Rest, all round, did him refresh.

On the way the Prophet met  
 Allah's men, those Prophets' set,  
 Abraham, Jesus, Moses,  
 Adam--all were in their places.  
 The celestial Paradise,  
 Where reside the good and wise,  
 With its house with halls of pearls,  
 Like of which e'em richest earls  
 Have not owned on earth, he saw;  
 'Tis a place without a flaw.

And the Prophet upward went,  
 Thro' the path that Heav'nward bent;  
 Now he clear could hear the Pen  
 Scribbling rapidly, the when,  
 Why, and how of men and things;  
 Of world's destinies it stings,  
 And of Nature's marvels too,  
 Full in all Her view and hue.

He, at the extremity,  
 Saw the tree of Eternity,  
 Full refulgent with God's light;  
 There the Prophet beaming bright  
 Stood, and so the angel too,

Glowing in his own true hue;  
He disclosed himself to him,  
Till then hiding in the dim.  
And from that Celestial Throne  
He heard Allah's ringing tone;  
His command to daily pray  
Fifty times, was found a way,  
Too much trying for his flock,  
Who were but a weaker stock;  
Thro' His grace did so derive  
Full, that fifty's worth in five;  
He, thus blessed, commanded right,  
Left that spot of glorious light.  
Souls, so great, so pure, as he,  
Seeking truth, such visions see.

## Chapter IX

## HIJRA OR THE HISTORIC EMIGRATION.

Now to the Holy Prophet came that voice  
Divine, to him who was of Allah's choice,  
Destined to spread His Message far and wide ;  
And so he must without delay decide  
To quit Mecca, his dearest seat of birth,  
Which could not gauge aright, the least, his worth.  
Alas ! His life and Allah's faith must find  
A harbour safe 'mong those who serious signed  
The pledge to safeguard both ; in Medina lay  
His hope, to act that matchless dramatic play.

That night was gloomy, dark, and ominous,  
And all round smelt deeply treacherous ;  
The Quraish chief soon grim and firm resolved,  
Whose minds so far with many a plot revolved,  
To despatch swift and straight their bitterest foe,  
Who oft despised their Gods from top to toe,  
To put an end to him in darkness dim ;  
With sword in hand, they were to fall on him,  
Thus each, avoiding blame of such a crime,  
Could share the blood by killing at a time.

So, hiding well their flashing swords, in haste  
They dashing went, (They had no time to waste)  
Those wolves, towards our Prophet's dwelling place;

They gnashed and gnarled and yelled in angry ways,  
 And stood prepared beside the house that night,  
 To fall upon their foe by morn's first light ;  
 How much impatient, restless they were then,  
 May well be guessed,—those bad, blood-thirsty men;  
 And there was one of them, who dashing rash  
 Towards the house, extreme desired to wash  
 His sword with Holy Prophet's precious blood ;  
 But scolding him, thus Abu Jahal said ;  
 " Just tarry only a moment more, you fool,  
 He will come out, I assure you, be cool."

Yes, yes, he did come out, dashed past by them,  
 And still they saw him not, our Islam's gem,  
 Armed full with that unflinching faith in Him,  
 Courageous slipped away 'midst all the dim ;  
 They watched with open eyes, yet missed their foe ;  
 For Allah blinded them ; His ways are so.  
 Evading thus the murderous men, this great,  
 Good soul, to Mecca bade good bye ; his mate,  
 That Abu Bakr, met him at a place,  
 As previous planned ; with what a beaming face  
 And throbbing heart did he accompany  
 His master dear that night ! his company  
 Was soothing balm to Muhammad indeed ;  
 A truly loyal, worthy friend in need.  
 The two good men of God passed stealthily  
 Beyond the City's bordering hills, and He

All-knowing Allah blessed and guided them;  
 Who else but him can such a crisis stem?  
 Cool was that night, and solemnly still;  
 It seemed each dale and hoary, weary hill,  
 Knew well the Heav'nly herald's grandest goal;  
 How gentle, humble, joyous was their stroll!  
 And now with twinkling stars the sky was clear,  
 The smiling moon who did 'midst them appear,  
 Bedecked the distant peak, her silvery streaks  
 Flashed down the stretches vast and up the peaks.  
 There let the Prophet and his friend proceed;  
 That perfect peace and solitude they need.

Imagine just in what a maddened mood  
 Th' assassins were, since complete futile proved,  
 At last, their anxious watch and waiting there  
 Around the house; the Prophet was nowhere;  
 But in his place and in his bed, Ali,  
 The noblest soul, there lay courageously;  
 How calm and cool he faced those furious foes!  
 He is the hero true who glad forgoes,  
 Like him, his life for such a noble cause;  
 Those raging men did now before him pause;  
 Their victim real had 'scaped before their eyes,  
 Befooling all of them in bold disguise,  
 Thus leaving faithful Ali in his place,  
 Who acted bold; he did not blink and gaze;  
 To him, the leader of the band, in loud

And thundering voice and in his mood high proud,  
 Thus spake: "Thou worthles weakling of a boy!  
 For us, thy master leaving thee, a toy,  
 Hath marched off clean in silent cunning mien;  
 And what art thou here for, why art thou seen?"

They jeered and sneered at him, made fun of him  
 In divers ways; before their i lols grim,  
 Those gruesome sight, they dragged him merciless,  
 For boundless was their rage, though profitless;  
 When one of them with awful burning rage,  
 Just like an untamed beast out of a cage,  
 Towards him rushed with flaming, flashing steel;  
 So awful restless with revenging zeal.

They held him back, for such a foolish act  
 They knew could not their purpose serve; now tact,  
 Discretion cool, prevailed o'er recklessness;  
 There was some goodness in their selfishness  
 Since he was off before their blinking gaze,  
 Why kill Ali who was there in his place  
 To due return their goods and gold? Why chafe  
 and rage? the innocent Ali was safe.

So was the Prophet with his follower  
 Who found a cave, before the morning's stir,  
 For them to hide awhile and shelter take;  
 Will he, Allah, His chosen gems forsake?

But idle were not those who thus were left  
 More maddened in their mood, but still bereft  
 Of any positive effect or good;  
 And that was not the time at all to brood  
 O'er plans and games frustrated already,  
 When actions fresh were needed urgently;  
 Hence all around, there up, here down, the dale,  
 Search parties rushed, although of no avail;  
 On camel's back they rode, band after band,  
 Away across the burning bed of sand;  
 For rest and repast good they cared a jot;  
 All day and night they roamed about and sought  
 In vain for food-prints' track left by those two  
 Good souls of God. Will He himself undo  
 What He had planned and those who were to be  
 His chosen voice Divine? Just let us see.

The Prophet and his friend could distinct hear  
 The pattering of the feet, so dangerous near  
 Just right above their hiding place were they,  
 That they could also hear what they did say;  
 Their cruel eyes did scan and scrutinise  
 The place close by, their loud and barbarous cries  
 Made Abu Bakr tremble anxious most;  
 He ev'ry moment feared that all were lost;  
 But perfect tranquil was the Prophet great,  
 Whose faith in God did not the least abate;  
 "Allah is sure with us," he whispering said;



Who else but Him so far them safely led ?  
 And He alone would sure protect them then,  
 From such blood-hound like beastly, murderous  
 men ;

And he did so almost mysteriously ;  
 With open, searching eyes, they did not see  
 Those hiding souls who set a few yards off ;  
 They grumbling, grunting, left the place with scoff.

Thus futile ended, by the grace of God,  
 That furious search, the two good sons then trod  
 Medinaward with buoyant, blithesome heart ;  
 They were destined to play a glorious part.  
 Still danger lurked, behind, that followed them ;  
 Still many a troublous tide they had to stem ;  
 No pains were spared and not an inch of ground  
 Was left unscanned the desert place ground ;  
 A tempting prize would fall to any one,  
 A hundred camels strong, it was no fun,  
 Who could the Prophet seize alive or dead ;  
 And this to further anxious searches led.  
 And they, those pious pilgrims, onward rode,  
 On camels good that gently tossed and strode,  
 Along those miles and miles of wilderness,  
 E'er contemplating of that happiness,  
 That bliss in serving Allah faithfully,  
 Thro' sufferings silent borne thus willingly,  
 Reciting fervent, frequent, Allah's praise,

Forgetting full those pinching hungry days,  
Exposed to burning, blazing, baffling heat,  
Upon the camels aching, baking seat;  
Not far behind them rode on a speed steed,  
A traveller wild and gaunt and bad, whose greed  
Extreme to have the tempting meed had brought  
Him there so far in breathless pursuit hot;  
His unjust attempts thrice to slay our dear,  
Pure Prophet, doubtless proved a failure sheer;  
For, more than once, he stumbling fell befooled;  
Thus he was humbled soon and also cooled;  
No more worried and vexed, they travelled straight  
And safe towards their destination great.

## Chapter IX

## THE HISTORIC ENTRY INTO MEDINA.

So, safe, saved from the clutches all,  
Medinaward they went again ;  
And he, with Abu Bakr then,  
Led by great Allah's greater call,  
That place of hospitality,  
Now reached, there him awaited glad  
Those worthy Citizens ; (They had  
That high and good mentality).

O what a noble yearning this !  
Spurned outright by his kith and kin,  
How he such hearts quite strange did win !  
He ne'er their faithfulness did miss ;  
For days and nights they anxious watched  
For him, the chosen one of Him,  
Until their aching eyes grew dim,  
And daily many a mile they marched.  
Right royal was the reception grand ;  
Medina's streets were full of mirth,  
Seemed somewhere soaring high from earth,  
Bestirred as by a magic wand ;  
There seated on his camel's back,  
Majestic, leisurely rode on,  
The Prophet on that Holy morn ;  
A day that did in nothing lack.

What crowds of people lined the streets  
So long before his entry there !  
All were alert then ev'rywhere,  
A sight that one but rare meets ;  
That peerless procession soon came out ;  
Those dashing youths with flushing smile,  
With flashing swords in brandishing styles,  
With fluttering flags, proud pranced about.

Dressed in their armour resplendent,  
Strode up and down the warriors gay ;  
They to the Prophet famed gave way ;  
From all around, the people sent  
The cry of "Allaho-Akbar" ;  
From their united throats and hearts  
Went out that cry Divine deeply starts ;  
His presence all did deeply stir ,  
They held that favoured camel's gear,  
To them a mark of honour sure,  
Their hearts' devotion was so pure ;  
The girls in chorous Voice and clear,  
Sang apt in praise of Allah's man ;  
And from the countless house tops too,  
From women, came forth greetings due ;  
Hearts, eyes, and feet, towards him ran,  
That day, this great, distinguished guest,  
Thus hailed, jogged on, 'midst rejoicings best.

## Chapter XI

## THE BATTLE OF BADR.

A brotherhood true beautiful it proved ;  
 The good Ansars so readily approved  
 And into practice put immediate,  
 The plan suggested by the Prophet great,  
 To live in emity, to help their best  
 Their Muslim immigrants, who suff 'ring worst  
 For Allah's sake, with pleasing patience bore,  
 All pains and burdens of a life full sore ;  
 For, they with them, their wealth and land did  
share ;  
 They worked for them, for them so much did care  
 That they became, in fact, blood brethren true ;  
 Such noble sacrifice is found in few.

E'en here, the faithful were not free from harm,  
 Despite the Ansars' ideal ways ; the storm  
 Clouds thick and ominous, made anxious more  
 And more the future days, and at the door  
 Were already the Quraish enemies ;  
 Nay, traitors worst there were within to tease ;  
 The known and open foe is not so bad,  
 The seeming friend is sure the greatest fraud.

Of the non-Muslims, it must be here set down,  
 Trustworthy least the jews were in that town,

Who from the beginning up to the end,  
 The Prophet did in divers ways offend,  
 Conspiring shameless with the Quraish men,  
 In actions which could not be forgiven,  
 Against the Prophet and his followers;  
 They were sharp, poisonous thorns; they proved a  
curse.

Incited by the Quraish foe, the desert hordes,  
 The Bedouins, bold boasting, brandishing swords,  
 Of plunder fond, Medina's walls soon reared,  
 Those Musims who but handful were, appeared  
 In hopeless, helpless, piteous plight in brief;  
 Unarmed, untrained, they were in greatest grief.  
 'Gainst organised and overwhelming odds,  
 'Gainst traitorous tribes and mightly Meccan Lords,  
 'Gainst Islam's principle of amity  
 And peace, it seemed a grave calamity,  
 They had to struggle hard and suffer a lot;  
 But to their sorely disturbed hearts was brought  
 That timely soothing balm of Allah kind,  
 Who faileth not for such a way to find.  
     "Ye in the cause of Allah fight  
     'Gainst those who fight 'gainst you;" thus right  
     Quoth He, "but first attack them not,  
     Which is not right, but sure a blot."  
 And in the meanwhile, preparation grand  
 Was going on in Medina that did stand  
 On its tiptoe, stirred deep by battle cries

And songs of victory that did arise  
 From war-bent men and women barbarous,  
 In jarring, jingling notes, thro' various  
 War weapons and thro' music instruments ;  
 Those clashing, flashing swords within battlements,  
 Those rattling noise of spears of battling mood,  
 Those tabors, bugles, trumpets, pipes, all rude,  
 With tinkling timbrels, boring drums withal,  
 Made Meccans war-mad awful, one and all.

The flames of hatred deep rose full and tall,  
 Out of a skirmish mere, made big, though small ;  
 Since sharp estrangement was there already  
 Between the two, quite little as a plea  
 Was sure enough and more, to start a war  
 In earnest right, the peaceful life to mar.  
 Mecca's trade route to Syria then lay  
 Thro' Medina ; the Muslims used to play  
 A trick to just avert the impending war,  
 From which trouble they wished to be afar ;  
 Those Meccan Caravans they did harass,  
 That thro' their city to and fro must pass ;  
 That merchant prince, called Abu Sufyan,  
 Bound Meccanward with many a caravan  
 Of merchandise was not, at all, in truth,  
 Maltreated, nor were any goods, in sooth,  
 Plundered, as it was false reported swift  
 Throughout Mecca; why should they care to sift

Falsehood from truth? to fight, resolved so grim  
 Were they; the cup was full up to the brim.

The Holy Prophet, in the meanwhile, sent  
 A party of his men to serious scent  
 And search around the desert neighbourhood;  
 For, from the foe there was the likelihood  
 Of danger springing up unexpected,  
 If things were left adrift uninspected  
 And unguarded; to harm untold they might  
 Soon lead them then, and worse would be their  
 plight.

As ill-luck taxing sheer would have it oft,  
 The searching party's task did not so soft  
 And smooth, as wished, go on unfortunate,  
 As strictly ordered by the Prophet great.  
 The party's leader, Ab lulla Bin Jahsh,  
 Was overzealous, hot-tempered, and rash;  
 Blood boiled within him when he chanced to see  
 Three Meccan merchants there, and angrily  
 The parties two, from bantering wards too bad  
 To blows quite good did come, and they rushed  
 mad,  
 Those Muslim men, towards the merchants three,  
 Quick killing one; the other two with glee,  
 Bound safe in chains, were by the Muslims brought  
 Before the Prophet good; their action wrought



In him the greatest wrath ; though not a blot  
 Too black, yet for the foe to launch their plot,  
 It was enough ; the Quraish war-minded,  
 This Nakhla incident exaggerated  
 In colours lurid deep ; forthwith to face  
 Grim war determined now were they ; to raise  
 Medina to the ground, to butcher all  
 Its citizens with bloody swords withal.

The thousand Meccan soldiers brave, now stood  
 Before Hobal, their war-God grave, who should  
 By signal sure confer consent to fight,  
 Confer his blessings, too, with all his might ;  
 The horsemen hundred stood without the shrine  
 But from the stony god, there was no sign,  
 Despite their dreary songs of Victory.

They marched, quite weary of such mystery,  
 Towards the battlefield most angrily,  
 That army organised well previously.  
 What could those three hundred and thirteen men  
 A handful mere, poor fed, poor trained, do then ?  
 But least disheartened was the Prophet brave,  
 To whom Allah that faith unflinching gave ;  
 But anxious most for his dear ones was he,  
 And no less anxious too was he to see  
 Avoided clean, all bloody, barbarous course.  
 That born Commander so full of resource,

Though short of all resources material,  
 Medina left, to face the ordeal,  
 To meet the Quraish foe so awful great,  
 Who swift Medinaward were marching straight.  
 He on the way a council held, to know  
 The Ansar's mind ; they were prepared to go  
 For him and Islam's sake quite joyously,  
 To any place unhesitatingly,  
 The last drop of blood to shed withal,  
 Though ev'ry one of them may die and fall.

They reached the neighbourhood of Badr then,  
 And there were already the Meccan men,  
 Just on the other side of the ravine ;  
 By dawn began that war unique Divine.  
 How truly grand and glorious was that day !  
 So fresh and full flashed forth the foe's array,  
 Resplendent in their armours newly made,  
 With swords and scimitars out of their shade ;  
 The battle axes glittered in the sun,  
 And there proud flirted many a pinion  
 Up from the lances tall ; the rows between,  
 Each hundred strong, the leaders strutted keen  
 But handful, as we said, were Islam's men,  
 Unmatched, and hopeless weak, their one 'gainst  
ten.  
 Yet, they in them possessed one precious thing,  
 That must to them that lasting glory bring,

Victorious or dead ; to glorify  
 In either way Great Allah's name so high,  
 Was e'er their aim supreme ; possessing though  
 Solely that strangest strength of spirit, there lo !  
 With that warm faith in Him, unswerving pure,  
 They finally won, though few, that battle sure.

How deeply felt for them our Prophet kind !  
 With what an earnest, sorely anguished mind  
 He prayed, beseeching Him to end the strife,  
 To save from death thus many a precious life,  
 Avoiding bloodshed sheerly barbarous !  
 So he stood there acutely anxious.

The Quraish army now drew near to fight ;  
 Their deep ranged phalanxes soon came in sight ;  
 The fight began, as it was wont with them,  
 With single combats first, each one, a gem,  
 Those Quraish soldiers three, that Utba famed,  
 His son and brother too, then loud proclaimed  
 Their readiness, into the arena  
 They haughty stepped, those two led by Utba ;  
 And them to meet, three of the Muslims then  
 Swift forward went ; "Why these three softest **men**  
 Of Medina, O Muhammad ?" quoth he,  
 That Quraish proud ; and so, another three,  
 Right from the warrior blood of Mecca own  
 Hamza, Ali, and Obayda well known,

Opponents equal fit to meet the blade,  
 To meet their pagan foes, came forward staid,  
 They whirled and jumped about, and parried blows,  
 Blade beat 'gainst blade, and hot the rival foes  
 Each other met, attacking quick with zest,  
 And jerking off and jolting oft the best.  
 The Quraish women yelled in hellish ways,  
 And barbarous shouted loud war songs of praise  
 And victory; but on the Muslims' part,  
 They for a cause that was dear to their heart,  
 Hard struggling gravely fought; there was to be,  
 Therefore, no yells and cries and foolish glee.  
 Now Hamza's sword quite clean and straight into  
 The side of Utba went, without ado,  
 The least, without delay at all, and so  
 Died he, who was just but a while ago  
 The Quraish leader proud; a heavy fall  
 It was; all things fall down however tall;  
 And thence, the other two followed him swift,  
 As Ali brave made short their fighting gift.

Indeed, a start quite good and decent too;  
 Another round of fight gave success due  
 'Gain to the Muslims good, then general  
 And regular became that classical

War so unique. Enraged beyond measure,  
 By such a bad defeat, with all pressure

The Quraish foe, upon the Muslims few,  
Who were less than one-third, with their undue,  
Unjust vantage, therefore, blind pell-mell fell ;  
Arrows and swords, lances and spears, must tell  
The rest, in brief, that there, 'midst shoutings wild,  
From warriors and women too unmild,  
Quick fatal rose and fell ; and they did strive  
Their best that Muslim army small to drive.  
But gradual less and less the war din grew,  
And victory was for the Muslims few ;  
Where are the great and thundering legions ?  
Swift off they fled, with all their pinions.  
Their many men there on the field lay dead,  
The few to success sure thus Allah led ;  
They feared Allah and righteous fought for Him,  
Bereft of His blessings, all strength grows dim.

God's Truth thus won, man's might was gone ;  
The Spirit triumphed, not body's power ;  
What can survive of God's grace shorn ?  
Allah for all is sure a tower ;  
Allah is Great, Allah is Truth,  
And He is Merciful, in sooth.

## Chapter XII

## THE BATTLE OF OHUD.

The position of Islam was strengthened, its prestige  
    rose high,  
After Badr's worthy victory; and this none can deny;  
All the more, the Meccans' wrath was kindled deep.  
    revengeful most  
They became, when thus their boasted might was  
    clean, completely lost.  
Gone, gone was their hold and influence now on  
    the desert race,  
Who in those Muslim's success, quite striking,  
    startling too, did trace  
Some mysterious might and awe behind, some  
    guiding hand at work;  
How could they, the Quraish, such a wondrous  
    battle's rumours burke ?  
Their proud capital, Mecca, far famed from yore its  
    great Shrine,  
And for commerce rich and vast withal, may  
    gradually decline,  
They feared right, from its position prime, due to  
    this bad defeat;  
Thro' another battle, they desired to wreak their  
    vengeance meet

For the loss of leaders precious; grim desperate  
     they were;  
 Sure the Prophet's melting, merciful ways, did not  
     the least them stir  
 Did he not return in marvellous mein that kindness  
     rare, supreme,  
 To the enemy war prisoners, and themselves did  
     they dream  
 Of this move from his spontaneous, from him  
     magnanimous;  
 For past persecutions 'cute, inhuman high and  
     barbarous?  
 They were fed, and clothed, and freed, not one was  
     treated unkindly;  
 But alas ! blind vengeance went to war again  
     ungratefully.

War at any cost, a final crushing clash, was hence  
     the spirit  
 In the Quraish mind predominant, to timely  
     effective hit  
 Back their foe; so, under Abu Sufyan's  
     commandership  
 Swift was formed a force three thousand strong,  
     sure of the firmest grip  
 On the Muslims few, complete blind of the fact  
     which gave success

But to those who had, behind, the might and right  
of righteousness,  
At Ohud, just three miles off from Medina, full  
filled all o'er  
With high walls of hills and valleys deep, the  
Muslims as before  
At Badr, who were but a handful, some seven  
hundred weak,  
Faced again, their mighty Meccan foe, who did  
worst vengeance seek.  
In this battle women on both sides did take an  
active part;  
But the Muslim women served well by their gentle  
nursing art.  
Untold harm and mischief much was done e'en  
early by the foe;  
For, Medina's crops and pastures were destroyed by  
them thorough.  
Quick the Prophet held a council grave, and he his  
men informed,  
How he thro' a vision smelt the danger that before  
him loomed,  
Warning him and them from facing risks outside  
Medina town;  
But this warning wise was heeded not by them,  
and was turned down,  
As befitting but cowards who lurk behind avoiding  
fight;



Those impatient youths 'mong them were for an  
open war outright.

So, the Prophet at sunset Medina left, and with  
his men  
Spent that night near by; by dawn the party  
onward marched again;  
Buoyant, bright, and warm did beam their trully  
bold and spotless hearts;  
Age'd and the youngest gladly vied to play their  
glorious parts.  
Allah's cause, great, sacred, righteous, worthy cause  
to vindicate,  
They, His soldiers few, but loyal most, fought  
'gainst a foe so great.  
Gifted with an iron will, skilled well in war the  
Prophet was.  
Sheltered safe by walls of rocks his men could  
fight, save for a pass  
At one side, that needed guarding all careful, a  
danger spot  
That disaster dire may likely bring, and all may  
come to nought  
If once by the foe pressed through; and so at that  
important gap,  
Strictly ordering not e'en an inch to move, what'er  
might hap,

He, that master strategist, commander great, so  
     stationed wise  
 Fifty archers deft, the Quraish ranks now stood  
     arrayed likewise.  
 Abu Sufyan, the leader famous of the Quraish men,  
 A position prime assumed close to the war-god,  
     Hobal, then ;  
 War-like women of the Quraish with war-songs  
     their warriors stirred ;  
 " On, ye warriors worthy true ! Courage, courage,"  
     they loud declared ;  
 And there was a Christian monk and poet, Abu  
     Amir called,  
 Who, too, with his rousing rhymes the warriors'  
     dashing spirit recalled  
 With a round of duels grave, the usual way with  
     them, the fight  
 Earnest then commenced ; in foolish, feverish,  
     mighty fury, right  
 At the Muslims forward dashed the Quraish foe  
     with flashing steel,  
 Thirsting wicked vengeance worst ; those Allah's  
     men of righteous zeal,  
 Fighting for a just and worthy cause, defended hard  
     and well  
 And devotedly, swift daring rushing to the front,  
     where fell

Many Meccan men like autumn leaves at Ali's  
astute.

Though Talha, that haughty Quraish standard-  
bearer, brandishing sword,

Forward stepped before brave Ali now, and him  
awfully bored

With unwarrented defiant words, he was, with his  
tall flag,

Swiftly rolled down dead; thus many were  
despatched who vain did brag.

Hinda, Abu Sufyan's wife, the Muslims' bitter foe,  
and worst

Foe of Hamza famed, a woman wolf, malicious,  
vicious most,

Wanted him to kill quick thro' a negro slave, and  
there alas!

Wahshi's javelin straight thro' his fame did sudden,  
fatal pass.

But the Muslims were not discouraged a bit by this  
sad blow;

They more desperately fought, and struck down  
many a mighty foe.

Sure success was theirs so far, but then there came  
a change for worse,

As it happens oft, for as the Quraish took to flight,  
reverse

Since the tide turned out to be for them with  
chilling death-blows sad,

Over confidence the Muslims put in a position bad.  
Leaving haste, abrupt, that passage so important  
as a base,  
They, those archers posted there to guard, their  
fleeing foes did chase  
'Gainst the Prophet's orders strict, not thus to  
leave the spot so weak  
And the Quraish Cavalry rushed there a fitting  
chance to seek.  
Now the fleeing foe turned round withal; the  
archers were pressed hard,  
These two Meccan foes between, and all success  
achieved seemed marred.  
Then fight fierce and blind was waged in desperate  
and maddened mood;  
Swords swift rose and fell midst men of parties  
both who baffled stood.  
And when there confusion worst with conster-  
nation great prevailed,  
Muslims themselves mutual fought, since foes from  
friends to see they failed.  
Cruel arrows flew and fell, and they were crammed  
and jammed entire;  
Then but for the Prophet's action brave, sure was  
destruction dire.  
Himself wounded severe though 'midst clouds of  
countless arrows keen,  
Though he easy safety could have sought behind  
the rocks unseen,

For his men, who struggling hardest fought, most  
     anxious he was ;  
 Dear to him indeed were they who all for-sook in  
     Allah's cause.  
 "Ye, rally round me, I am the Apostle of Allah",  
     he cried  
 Bold and loud to them, and thus their Holy  
     Prophet they descried.  
 Him the foe so also saw, and him to slay was sure  
     their aim;  
 See how brave he risked his life! see how to him  
     their arrows came!  
 But too precious was his life! to save the same no  
     sacrifice  
 Could be deemed too great; his peerless, fearless  
     men but least did price  
 Their own petty lives, quite careless of them were,  
     in saving him.  
 Like a human wall they round him unmoved stood,  
     fought for him grim,  
 Warding off, deft, swift, and desperate, those  
     arrows thick that came,  
 Falling down dead one by one, but glowing in  
     immortal fame.  
 But meanwhile was caused a panic unnecessary  
     and vain,  
 Thro' a purely false report that then the Prophet  
     dear was slain.

The truth was that one, Musab, resembling him  
was killed;  
With grief and great confusion hence the Muslims'  
hearts were filled;  
News alarming most it was; to desperation worst  
it lead.  
Some lost heart and hope entire, and some their  
sword flung down and said,  
That but futile further fighting was, since he for  
whom they fought,  
Was no longer there with them; but why for  
further life they sought,  
If the Prophet dear was lost? So pertinently  
questioned one;  
Not to fight was not the way, since all efforts  
would be undone;  
He suggested fighting for the sacred cause with  
fresher zest.  
When they found their Prophet still alive, for him  
they fought the best,  
Guarding him throughout and warding off attacks  
unflinchingly.  
Even an inch of ground the foe gained not, and  
they were fittingly  
By the Muslims' darts repulsed complete, and soon  
they left the field;  
Boasted strength was crushed, and utter helplessness  
was clear revealed.

Inspiration from the Prophet's peerless personality,  
Thus into success transformed all failures' worst  
stupidity.

Vanquished though, before they left the field, those  
Quraish barbarous most,

Perpetrated acts atrocious and cruelty utmost,

Letting out in full and finally all their foul  
tendencies

Of revenge and hatred deep, e'en on the Muslims'  
dead bodies,

Mutilating them most merciless; Hinda, that  
demon, she,

Hamza's body ripped outright, his liver chewed  
with ghastly glee,

And proud garlanded herself with his intestines  
all withal,

The soft-hearted Prophet prayed to Allah to forgive  
them all.

An unique, alluring story from the war will give a  
peep

As to how the women to the Prophet were  
devoted deep.

When the archers' unwise move spoilt for a time  
the Muslims' game,

Giving the chance to Khalid's force, some Muslims  
back to Medina came,

Thinking falsely that their army were already  
 overthrown ;  
 But their women flung at them but dust and words  
 of scornful tone.  
 Anxious most were they about Holy Prophet's  
 precious life;  
 Angry most they so became when he was left alone  
 'midst the strife.  
 Some left home immediate, marched straight  
 towards the battle scene,  
 And one Ansar woman was 'mong them, who was  
 extremely keen  
 Then and there to know about the Prophet's  
 health, and soon she on the way  
 Some one haply met, returning from the battlefield  
 that day.  
 When again and 'gain she questioned him of news  
 important most,  
 He, at first, informed her of her father's death, that  
 she had lost,  
 As he next told her, her brother too; the saddest  
 news then came,  
 Of her husbands fall; indifferent and clam, she was  
 the same ;  
 For, they fighting for a worthy cause had fallen  
 glorious;  
 Safe, the Prophet was, she knew; her gladdened  
 face glowed beautiful.



When she saw that sacred face, clean gone was all  
anxiety,  
And she said: "You are alive, hence small is all  
calamity."  
Thus, at Uhud, such spirit undying, Islam showed  
at best ;  
Indecisive though the fight, triumphant glowed  
such spotless zest.

## Chapter XIII

## THE BATTLE OF AHZAB.

Exhibiting hatred deep, revenge extreme, and  
passions worst,  
Finally retired the Quraish foe from Ohud's field;  
yet rest  
So contended they did not the least, but were  
bent on the more,  
In pursuing hopelessly and foolishly their ways of  
yore,  
Warring 'gainst the Muslims oft; they marshalled  
a mighty force,  
Which equipped and trained, and with the  
maximum resource,  
Marched towards Medina straight, determined  
grim to crush the might  
Of the Muslims few outright, who were then flung  
in saddest plight.  
For what could they do, hemmed in by foes all  
round, within, without ?  
And what strength at length could be in them, by  
frequent wars tired out !  
  
Those Bedouin tribes, the Jews at Khaiber too,  
swelled but the side

Of the Quraish ranks; the very Jews who did with  
     them reside,  
 At that moment last, quite heedless of requests  
     and pledges signed,  
 Worst behaved, and doubtless faithless proved, and  
     it was most unkind.  
 Thus, 'gainst such a combined body strong and  
     careful organised,  
 Fighting with handful men, not well-equipped,  
     was ill-advised,  
 Courting but disaster dire; the Prophet, so, pursued  
     the course  
 That seemed best and safest then, that would  
     perplex the Quraish force,  
 Mighty most it might be though, it was good,  
     successful plan.

Round Medina's unprotected sides, the Muslims  
     soon began  
 Digging trenches deep and wide; indeed it was a  
     glorious scene,  
 Where true dignity, divinity of work, so well was  
     seen;  
 There, witness that all-inspiring tow'ring per-  
     sonality,  
 Who alone could so instil in all that true vitality!  
 In the very 'midst of labourers, besmeared with  
     dust he stood,

Himself working like the rest, and carrying loads  
     in joyous mood.  
 As they digged with beaming countenance, they  
     sang in chorus clear  
 Allah's praise, beseeching blessings, mercy, strength,  
     and guidance e'er  
 From Him, for success in their too trying task lay  
     ahead;  
 And we shall see how thro' His aid the mighty  
     Quraish army fled.

So the digging work went on, inspired by purest  
     faith in Him,  
 Whose cause holy dearest was to them, hence were  
     determined grim,  
 What may be the cost or loss, to save Islam and  
     Medina,  
 From destructive, wicked hands, and there one  
     hardest rock they saw.  
 None of them could move or break a bit the rock  
     so adamant;  
 Then the Prophet tried a chance, and out of it a  
     spark there went,  
 As he struck it with his axe which made it move  
     withal a bit.  
 "God is Great" cried all with glee, and 'gain the  
     Prophet gave a hit

At the stone and it was cracked, and 'gain all  
shouted, "God is Great;"

With those hope-inspiring words, the whole place  
did reverberate.

Lo! soon into little pieces broke that rock at his  
last stroke,

And to him of Islam's conquest over empires all  
He spoke.

Assured thus of Allah's guide and help when  
helpless real they were,

Fortified ev'ry way, they watched the Quraish  
further stir.

That gigantic army of ten thousand soldiers swift  
rushed down,

Like a cyclone huge, terrific most, to crush Medina  
town;

But surprised and e'en perplexed they were to find  
there none to fight,

And were more surprised to find those trenches  
deep before their sight.

Even at the outset, so defeated clear and  
non-plussed sure,

Laying seige to Medina entrenched, was hence the  
only cure.

For about a month dragged on the tedious siege,  
but futile all

Proved the Quraish efforts furious, repeatedly did  
fall

Backward many 'mongst their ranks, repulsed  
complete at ev'ry tide.

True, their stones and arrows worked great havoc  
on the Muslim side;

Still they failed to gain an inch of ground; vain  
was their hollow might;

They were held at bay so firm by those who fought  
a steadfast fight

In the name of Allah Great, Whose guiding hand  
such marvels wrought;

And there in the battle of the trench, see how  
brave Ali fought !

Restless grew the desert hordes, unused to this sort  
of warfare ;

Sorely disappointed by reverses bad were they,  
since there

Sure of easy victory and booty great, they eager  
went.

And starvation stared at them, in full its contri-  
bution lent,

Making matters worse; the lingering siege had  
drained their store entire.

Gradually, their men and animals began soon to  
expire;

How could they replenish then their store in such  
a desert place,

Clean devoid of fertile vales or villages close by?  
to face

Even water scarcity was worst indeed, inducing  
 least  
 Those, who were but hired, to further fight, who  
 glad so far did feast.  
 But still worse the Muslims fared within Medina's  
 walls, for days  
 Quite cut off from all outside access and help  
 remained that place,  
 Where so many tender babes expired, of mother's  
 milk deprived;  
 And what could there be in starving mothers  
 breasts? They but survived  
 Death somehow, courageous facing like their men  
 starvation full;  
 See how many Muslims silent bore such sufferings  
 so faithful!  
 With two slabs of stones tied to his stomach tight,  
 behold him there,  
 Here true, the Prophet great, who glowed with  
 inspiration rare!  
  
 Like grapes bunches beamed the groups of stars; it  
 was midnight almost;  
 Keeping watch, a Muslim guard was sitting silent  
 at his post,  
 When he, sudden startled by a stranger's voice, rose  
 from his place;  
 There came one with infant in her arms, he saw  
 his dear wife's face.

Thus he queried her : " What are you here for,  
                     and with this thing  
 Of a tender babe ? ". " Life precious doth no  
                     longer to it cling ;  
 Allah gave and He hath taken back the same, 's  
                     she calm replied,  
 And was ready him to help ; with him in Allah's  
                     cause she vied.

As they set together so, clouds gathered o'er the  
                     star-lit sky ;  
 Rumbling thunder added awe to gloom, and  
                     flashing swift did fly  
 Lightning straight across the Vault ; the groaning  
                     wind grew into a storm  
 With a piercing chill ; down-pour of rain did well  
                     its part perform.  
 For the Quraish foe already famished most, this  
                     too much,  
 This sort of God's might thro' nature wild ; for  
                     they had not seen such.  
 'Midst the din and confusion, all frightened fled  
                     immediate,  
 Yelling, cursing, crying loud, and for their leaders  
                     did not wait ;  
 By the storm uprooted lay the tents, and weapons  
                     scattered lay,



And dead animals withal, thus leaving all, behind,  
fled they.

Now Medina's spacious field was full of bustling,  
battling life,

But a while before! How calm so soon became  
the place of strife.

Backed by Allah's marvellous might, invincible,  
invisible,

'Gain the Muslims' right triumphed, 'gainst might  
unjustifiable.

## Chapter XIV

## THE PEACE OF HUDAIBIYYA.

Wearied worst, with tedious, taxing wars,  
Those good and faithful Muslim emigrants  
Of Medina, now utmost yearned and pined  
To have a sight of Mecca, dear and sweet,  
E'er to their hearts, though they the same left once,  
Quit desperate and awful disgusted,  
Harsh persecuted by the Quraish bad.  
And further more, the Muslims brave and few,  
So far, from victory to victory,  
Have marvellous marched, the mighty Quarish force  
Dislodging at all times; thus Islam great  
And true, soon splendid spread and glowed the  
more.

Now quite necessary it was, no doubt,  
To undertake a solemn pilgrimage  
To Mecca, hallowed by the House of God,  
To show th' spiritual greatness of His Faith  
In full, to pay their homage due to Him,  
Whose guiding Hand them helped to crush the foe,  
The Holy Prophet had a vision too,  
Of himself with all his companions,  
Performing pilgrimage in Mecca's shrine.

So with his faithful fourteen hundred men,  
The Prophet started Meccaward at once,

This purely peaceful Mission to achieve.  
 Unarmed, with swords within their scabbards safe,  
 With animals for sacrifice, they marched,  
 So that the Quraish could too clearly see  
 Their peaceful intention of Pilgrimage.  
 Despite precaution such, for war, prepared  
 The Meccans then, who always were war-mad.  
 The Muslims' entry into Medina  
 Was by them strict forbidden, so, in brief.  
 The Prophet who was after peaceful ways,  
 Who was particular and anxious most,  
 To clean prevent e'en slight unpleasantness,  
 Sent massengers to mighty Meccan chiefs.  
 Obdurate though they were beyond measure,  
 The Prophet thro' his dealings patient sheer,  
 At last managed to bring about a peace,  
 The peace of Hudaibiyya—so called, because,  
 Hudaibiyya, a place near Mecca,  
 Wae where the Prophet's party lay encamped,  
 And where the peace was signed between the two.  
 According to its terms, the Muslims had,  
 E'en then and there, to go back quick and straight  
 To Medina, performing pilgrimage  
 There at Mecca next year, in three days' time.  
 No Meccan Muslims were allowed to go  
 With them to Medina, and Jundal's case,  
 A Meccan Muslim persecuted sore  
 And merciless by his own tyrant sire,

Must clearly show blind persecution's ways,  
And it doth also show how jealously  
The Prophet guarded pledges' sanctity;  
He was in honour bound to keep his word.  
Most merciful, although that great soul was,  
He could not shelter grant to Jundal still,  
Consoling him, by saying that Allah  
Would find without delay a way for him.

Indignant greatly were the Muslims all,  
Who deemed the peace humiliating high;  
But He, Allah Himself, revealed the truth,  
And all were glad to hear thro' this Divine  
Approval sure, about the Prophet's right,  
Ripe judgement wise; he won the game outright.  
Peace hath its victories and glory great,  
And he knew this, the Prophet truly great.

## Chapter XV

## THE CONQUEST GLORIOUS.

It was the sacred month, Ramadan called,  
And on the tenth of it, the Prophet left  
Medina for that conquest glorious  
Unparalleled, the conquest of Mecca :  
He, with his faithful Muslims ten thousand,  
Marched down the hills and thro' the divers dales,  
And unopposed triumphant treaded soon  
Thro' all those sev'el Quraish, Meccan streets.  
Great Islam had that might Divine behind,  
True moral might from Him, Almighty God,  
And not that unjust strength of no avail,  
The brutal strength from numbers more and more ;  
How chilled and numbed and paralysed complete,  
Were now the Prophet's cruel, Quraish foes !  
No barbarous battle cries were raised, and not  
A stone, not e'en a single arrow vexed  
Or marred the Muslims' perfect peaceful march,  
And not a drop of precious blood was shed.

Think of this marvel well—a bloodless way  
Thro' which this magic might was doubtless theirs ;  
A city whole thus at their mercy lay ;  
It was most fitting opportunity,  
Permissible and justifiable,

To punish right and straight those enemies,  
 Who ruthless, reckless persecuted long,  
 His staunch devotees all, who struggling hard  
 Defended his and Allah's righteous cause,  
 From far and near they came in batches big  
 And small; in pairs and singly too they came,  
 Unswerving least, in tiring times and wars:  
 Was not he himself forced to flee from there,  
 Out of that dearest town where he was born?  
 When thus revenge was just and natural,  
 In him effulgent glowed in full that trait  
 Divine, in him who was magnanimous;  
 Before that spell of mercy's mightiest power,  
 All bitterest enmity of stonist hearts  
 Did give way melting swift; what noble words  
 Came from that noble soul who said to them,  
 "There shall be no reproof 'gainst any one."  
 Not e'en reproof when many well deserved  
 Severest punishment, death by the sword;  
 And those who fled for life, thus fearing worst,  
 Were pardoned free and full and recalled safe:  
 He captured million hearts with mercy's might:  
 A spiritual conquest, truly glorious!

The ancient house of God, the Kaba shrine,  
 Was then quick cleared of all its countless Gods  
 And goddesses grim, who fell down one by one,  
 And once more there Great Allah reigned supreme.

The Holy Prophet soon to Safa mount  
Repaired, and on the top of it he sate,  
To solemn carry out his task Divine;  
Islams, the only purest faith of God,  
They all embraced before that merciful soul;  
How convinced clear, to him all humbly went.  
In thousands, they to Safa Mount marched off,  
From far and near they came in batches big  
And small, in pairs and singly too they came;  
See what sheer force of mercy did! Can sword  
Such marvels work and tame such hardened foes?  
It was a classic triumph indeed,  
And Allah's peace and blessing be on him!

## Chapter XVI

## THE MEMORABLE PILGRIMAGE.

The mighty Meccan victory,  
Was victory complete;  
A worthy, wondrous feat,  
In world's alluring history.

Thus Allah's faith was perfected;  
Throughout Arabia land,  
Beyond the desert sand,  
Swift Islam spread unexpected.

E'er guided, guarded, right informed,  
By Him, The only One,  
And there's besides Him none,  
The Prophet full His task performed.

His happy end was drawing now;  
He heard Allah's message;  
That final pilgrimage;  
Straight to His Blissful world above.

To praise Allah and all to weld,  
To pay His homage due,  
And bid to Th' world adieu,  
A final pilgrimage he held.



How touching, grand, and memorable,  
 Was then that huge concourse,  
 And also that discourse,  
 A sermon ineffaceable!

To them, those hundered thousand strong,  
 Of moral virtues' worth  
 And place, for man on earth,  
 Of God, he One, he spoke for long.

"I leave The Book to show the way;  
 Hold fast to it for e'er,  
 For there's not one better;  
 Then sure ye shall not go astray."

Of brotherhood, equality,  
 Of women's honoured place,  
 Denouncing baser ways,  
 He stressed with all solemnity.

"Have I God's message right conveyed?"  
 The Prophet asked at last;  
 "Yes, verily thou hast,"  
 In one voice they that reply made.

Still rings that message fresh and clear,  
 That rang beyond the dale;  
 It can't be old and stale,  
 His voice Divine we seem to hear.

## Chapter XVII

## THE LAST DAYS OF THE PROPHET.

The Prophet's sacred task on earth was done;  
He showed the ignorant, God's righteous way;  
O what a marvellous part he played! He won  
A name and fame devoid of time's decay.

The end of life that comes to all below,  
E'en monarchs mighty can't this death eschew,  
Came to the Prophet, too, in time, and so  
His body, day by day, still weaker grew.

That poison strong that him then did not kill,  
Now preyed upon his failing health with speed;  
But at the mosque he led the prayer still;  
For rest, this tireless worker least paid heed.

His state grew worse and worse; his end was but  
A question of days; quite calm, composed, serene,  
And ready, was that spotless soul, there shut  
So long up in a mortal cage unclean.  
As wished by him, he was with care removed,  
For he could hardly walk, such weakness had,  
To young Ayesha's house, and all approved  
Of this; he nursing tenderest needed bad.

And till that moment last, his spirit was high  
 Alert, though weak of limbs entire he lay;  
 He said: "On Him, the Only One, rely,  
 And on His Book, th' Quran, that shows the way,"

He clear, emphatic, pointed out the Truth,  
 That he was but a man, like all others,  
 Though Allah's humble messenger, in sooth;  
 To worship else, sane Him, in sure a curse.

The day inevitable came; how glorious glowed  
 That morn! How joyous true he felt in him,  
 When himself saw that what he solemn showed  
 Had fruited full! He heard dear Allah's hymn.

And in the noon, so soon the crisis came,  
 That ev'ry moment seemed the last to be;  
 The Holy Prophet's soul, with Allah's name  
 Still flashing fresh, then upward flew with glee.

"From Him we come and to Him we return,"  
 Universal law is this, Divine and stern.

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AN APOLOGY  
FOR THE  
“NEW LIGHT.”  
OR  
CONSIDERATIONS ON A RECENT MOVEMENT  
IN THE  
INDIAN MAHOMEDAN SOCIETY.  
BY  
MUSTAFA KHAN.



*ALLAHABAD :*  
PRINTED AT THE PIONEER PRESS.

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1891.

# DEDICATION.

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TO MOULVI

ALTAF HUSAIN HALI

THIS BOOKLET IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY  
ONE WHO HAS DERIVED FROM HIS WORKS  
SO MUCH PLEASURE AND STIMULUS.



# PREFACE.

No apology seems necessary for this work. The Author is conceited enough to believe that it meets in a small way a want which is already felt. Who the "New Light" are, and in what sense is this an apology for them, the reader can find out for himself.

I am well aware that popularity is not likely to be its lot ; at the same time I have reasons for thinking that the book must go forth.

Friends will at any rate perceive that I have not been idle ; and I trust this work in no way affects the possibility of my producing a better one. But as this one is only a rude attempt, it is just that I should declare that I expect little favour.

M. A.-O. COLLEGE,  
ALIGARH; }  
*December 12th, 1890.*

M. K.



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## CHAPTER I.

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### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE nation whose palmy days do not belong to a remote period of history, finds it difficult to identify itself with foreign ideas, when any of the numerous agencies introduces it to them. And when the agency happens to be conquest, the new ideas appear stamped, as it were, with a big Government seal. The adoption of them is considered servile. Patriotism, too, very often invests the olden mode of thinking with a charm which overpowers judgment, and raises sensitiveness to a high pitch. The general tendency at such a crisis is to cling to olden things and abhor whatever is new.

But in the midst of this popular enthusiasm for the old, there will spring up another feeling—not the less strong because it is not popular, and not the less patriotic because it advocates improvement in the light of new discoveries.

The two currents of thought exist at the present time among Indian Mahomedans. They are



appealing on behalf of an unborn Newton or an unborn Macaulay. Curious though it may appear, it is nevertheless a fact that, in spite of the present condition of the nation, our expectations and aspirations are quite as high as those of the most prosperous, and in the M. A.-O. College you have a guarantee that we are not building castles in the air. But there is another guarantee besides this one, and that is, the attitude of the enlightened portion of all communities towards our College. The Hindus are our own countrymen, but Englishmen are not our countrymen, and this tends to bring into bold relief their attitude towards our College. Oh! how many barriers are here crossed; but perhaps barriers are made that they may be crossed. And yet, I say, how many barriers are here crossed. The barrier of religion, one of the most formidable that separate people from people, is crossed? The barrier of race is crossed. Another barrier is crossed. The barrier that separates the rulers from the ruled is crossed; and here are we a people different in religion and race, colour and creed, returning thanks for the favours received. And while speaking of the favours received from the English people, is it possible to forget the favours received from the Sovereign—direct from the Sovereign—that the English people and we are proud to have in common; Her Gracious Majesty in Her Royal English home, thinking of her poor Mahomedan subjects, and presenting to their College at Aligarh her works bearing the name *Victoria Regina*—beloved, respected name in the Royal handwriting! Religion and position constitute no barrier: thousands of miles of dreary ocean constitute no barrier. Our Sovereign's heart is beating in unison with ours. Sovereigns must not be thanked in words, and we as a nation are not men of many words. Yet we shall thank Her Majesty, and we shall thank her in deed. There is no portion of her Indian

Empire—vast as it is—that shall not be benefited by the labours of our leaders, for in endeavouring to educate the Mahomedans they are contributing their mite to the general happiness of civilized mankind. And a civilized Mahomedan people, such as they are trying to create, will be a better people and worthier than we are of our ancestors. It is possible to reach these people, and by helping the present workers to earn the gratitude of generations unborn. Where are the millionaires of India? Where are those who have it in their power to assist us? Do such people exist? and if they do, why don't they come and help us in bringing about a desirable consummation. I hope they are accessible to appeal, and it is open to me to appeal to them. I appeal to them, and I shall appeal to them over and over again to help us in civilizing a people who have known better days—a people to whose early civilization the modern civilized communities themselves owe not a little.

not running parallel to each other. For two such elements to co-exist and not clash, were an impossibility. Hence, amongst other things, the contemptuous appellation—the “New Light.”\*

In borrowing this name from the opposite camp, I trust I have furnished an illustration of the “New Light’s” willingness to adopt whatever is good, wheresoever it may be found, and to whomsoever it may belong. It is most expressive; indicating, as it does, that section of the Mahomedan community which has been awakened, by a contact with European culture, to a sense of its low place in the scale of civilization. The “New Light” have hitherto sustained violent attacks in comparative silence; and were this the right thing to do, differences ought by this time to have disappeared. But, as it is, I believe their silence has made matters worse. Their opponents have come to regard them as an impotent lot; and their friends are doubting whether, after all, the whole thing is not a sham. To convert their opponents to their own mode of thought being hopeless, why should the “New Light” embarrass their friends by remaining inactive? Inactivity, whatever the causes to which it is due, is at present their

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\* This phrase has been applied to a small section of Mahomedan society in modern India, which is mainly characterised by the following features :—

1. The adoption to some varying greater or less extent of English dress and other outward accompaniments of a European civilization.
2. A certain amount of dissatisfaction with the existing mode of religious thought.
3. A desire for certain social reforms.

chief characteristic—inactivity in all the different departments of life—political, social and literary.

To many people who are not responsible statesmen, politics offer a light and exciting theme. At this day political questions have found their way to places where no such questions had ever reached. This is of course owing to the activity of people who are in hot pursuit of the game of politics, and one might have thought inactivity on the part of the “New Light” to be impossible in the face of this marvellous activity. It is not necessary to say whether the latter are seeking to inflict an injury on Mahomedans; but they being a different community, their activity, even if it be for the good of the Mahomedans, ought to lead the “New Light” to a similar activity on their own account.

A remarkable feature of the Congress movement is its fecundity for political literature; but this literature emanates from either European or Hindu, and is therefore not calculated to remove the apprehensions of the Mahomedans. There are, it is said, some highly-educated Mahomedans who approve of the Congress; but I have not come across anything like a lucid and vigorous statement of the reasons why Mahomedans should disregard the alarming note sounded by Sir Syed Ahmed. Nor is it possible to congratulate the young Mahomedans, opposed to the Congress on their active support of the *anti*-Congress party. This party is greatly indebted to an English gentleman, who has taken up the cudgels on behalf of

their community, and, as far as a statement of their views in the English language is concerned, they are mainly dependent on him.\* I appeal to my readers to say if this state of things does not betray a suicidal thoughtlessness in those who have every reason to be thoughtful. Undoubtedly the number of such Mahomedans as have received English education is not very large; but still, and even after making allowances, they have a small party, which ought to show its hand more often than it does. I believe if they would only take the trouble to study the question for themselves, the "New Light" will find that even in politics, that hot bed of differences, they can meet on common ground. I believe earnestness on the part of individuals will lead to the formulation of what may perhaps be called a national policy, and to an organization of the forces they have at command.

Further, there has sprung up, during the last ten or twelve years, a literature in Urdu, the chief characteristic of which is the utter absence of anything like serious thought. These writings generally emanate from the men of the new school, and throw a strong light on their condition of mind. It is interesting to compare these writings with the works of elderly Mahomedans. These are very often of considerable merit; and considering that English has thrown the vernaculars into the background, their success ought to be particularly gratifying to the authors.

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\* Mr. Theodore Beck.

Urdu has, ever since it came into existence, been tolerably rich in poetry. But the taste, which approved of the sort of poetry in which it abounds, is fast vanishing. The fact is, that our poets have adored Cupid with too much avidity. Each one of them, moreover, seems to have inherited—the very same harp on which our first great poet played; and to have kept on thumping it, as in duty bound. No wonder that it has ceased to please. Love is undoubtedly ennobling under certain conditions; but under an eastern sky it loses its power to elevate. Oriental mode of life, their ways of thinking, and their social\* and religious laws, are alike unfavourable to honest love. This is probably the reason why Urdu poetry, which is brimming over with love, has led to a material deterioration of the Mahomedan national character. That this state of things urgently called for reform, was widely admitted; but it was reserved for *Hali* to light the guiding beacon. His chief poetical work, the first of its kind I believe, has met with a most remarkable success, and immortality is already predicted for it by young Mahomedans.

Attempted delineation of romantic love, under the circumstances peculiar to Oriental mode of life, has also marred Urdu fiction. The view of life and society, taken on the whole by this literature, is decidedly unwholesome. No doubt the authors who imported the element of love, did so with a due sense of its potentiality; but few, if any

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\* The *purdah* system, for example.

at all, contrived to make it consistent with honesty. I do not mean to say that works of this sort are peculiar to Urdu. The fact, however, remains that in other languages fiction occupies a very wide field, and one can always turn from a polluted to a pure fountain. This was impossible for Urdu readers till recently, and even now I think this branch of literature is not so successfully pursued as it might be. The reason why the more important departments of literature hitherto remain almost unrepresented in Urdu, seems to be the absorbing influence of poetry over Urdu-speaking geniuses. This influence amounted to a monopoly of talents; and even at this day far too many are entangled in the meshes of poesy. But the old school which has furnished us with poets and novelists, has also furnished us with workers in other fields. The foregoing remarks are not intended to give the reader an adequate idea of the work now being done in Urdu literature. All I have attempted is to indicate the attitude of the "New Light." As in other departments, so in this, their inactivity stands out in bold relief when contrasted with the activity of the old school. The extenuating circumstances that may be urged on their behalf are almost overbalanced by the advantages which they might be expected to possess. The materials at their command are abundant, and they have access to many of the great masters in the art of working out materials. They have greater facilities for making their works popular; for they are

in a better position to understand the taste that is being formed. And if the money spent on education be taken as the criterion, they are better educated than the workers.

Again, if we come to consider their attitude towards social reform, we find that they are at best passive. From their articles in the Mahomedan press—such as it is—one is led to believe that they recognise the necessity of reform. In fact, they are never tired of declaring that the present condition of the Mahomedans is deplorable. But their writings on this subject are characterised by a vagueness unworthy of men who have really hard work to perform. There are some who believe that their views are too advanced to be acceptable; others are perhaps beginning to stir themselves; but the majority are content to take such morsels as the older generation may now and then throw towards them. It is this spirit of dependence which seems to be a chief characteristic of the “New Light,” and which is keeping them from discharging the duties of the position in which they find themselves placed.

It is difficult to imagine human beings having more points of difference than the young Mahomedan of the “New Light” and his neighbour. Those of the former that are too elevated to be approached by common people do not know the scrutiny, the criticism, the ridicule to which they would be subjected if they mixed with their



co-religionists on terms of equality. The schism is natural ; but to leave the schism to plead for itself is not natural. It is the duty of those who are after all a small minority, to explain to the scoffing majority that they are not so out of mere caprice. In consideration of the light which has been vouchsafed to them, the "New Light" have come to regard themselves as the logical conclusion of sound logical premises, and, no doubt, they are right. But the process being one of a progressive series, could not have stopped short at the first stage. The moment they probe themselves, it becomes evident to the "New Light" that the influence has descended lower down than the surface. The danger is that they may suffer themselves to flounder in the ocean of uncertainties, now that the old anchor can no longer hold them fast. There are those in the fleet that have never left the security of the harbour ; but others have been smitten by the waves of doubt ; and until the damage done is repaired, vessels must remain unserviceable.

The object of this work shall have been amply achieved if, while showing that it is wrong to condemn the "New Light," it can bring home to the "New Light" themselves the necessity of action. Re-building, I submit, must proceed along with demolishing, otherwise there is the danger that they may find themselves cast out on the wide ocean of life without chart or compass.

I have said all that seems to me necessary by way of criticism. There are so many critics in the

field that criticism, and even good criticism, is far from scarce. An apology, even such a poor one as the present, is what is wanted.

The "New Light" in some respects appear to me to be much as the Britons were immediately after the Romans had left them to themselves—"between the barbarians and the deep sea." Wedged between Europeans and the majority of their own co-religionists, their condition is by no means enviable. If they were permitted to spend the latter part of their lives like their youth, free from the turmoils of the world, they would indeed be happy. But as it is every one of them has to encounter hard realities, and it is then he feels that he is unjustly treated.

The official world they find most unaccommodating ; and as most of them have to come in contact with officials, their attitude is a standing difficulty. I embrace this opportunity of referring to the subject, as the present work is not likely to afford me another.

If they would only respect the fact that as a class the "New Light" do not owe their existence, like the grasshopper of the Greeks, "to the spontaneous action of the earth," but are indebted to circumstances which several generations of sympathetic English officials have striven to bring about, the present occupants of high posts would at once see that their attitude towards the "New Light" is unjust. The bare fact that the English are here suffice

to explain the phenomenon which some pretend that they do not understand—the springing up of a class of men who wish to emulate them. There are, however, very few English officials who like the “New Light.” The majority consider them presumptuous apes whose manners are different from those of the “fine old men” of the fine old school. If they only knew the price they have to pay for the dissembling courtesy of their favourites, they would readily forgive the “New Light” who want to walk erect, though in doing so they unfortunately now and then stumble. In daily life, it is perhaps better to be thoroughly understood than to be adored, though it is perfectly conceivable that the latter will be more gratifying to many.

The manners for which the official world has a pronounced partiality are, many of them, the legacy of an effeminate court. They are distinctly traceable to the same source which, under the guise of elegance, introduced a baser alloy into the Mahomedan character. Many of them, no doubt, may retain their place; but others must make room for the sturdy grace of European manners.

The “New Light’s” partiality for European ways has of course led to many innovations. Nor can we deny that the abortive attempts of some very often place them in perilous proximity to the region of the ridiculous. But are not these the unavoidable incidents of a commencement, and is it right that they should be made much of by the very

people whose advent has caused this divorce between the old and the new ?

Whether the ways are at all worth adopting, which come by contact with a foreign people, is by itself a debatable question. But when contact is brought about arbitrarily, an arbitrary agent generally decides the question. The weaker party finds itself unable to resist the encroachment of the ways of the stranger. We know of Romanised Britons, of Mahomedanised Hindus, if also of Anglecised Mahomedans.

Look at a country on the eve of its conquest. Look at it again fifty years later, and you will find the ways of the ruled greatly superseded by those of the rulers. A Hindu of the time of King Porus—were he permitted to re-visit his native country after the Mahomedan conquest—would have found the ways of his people greatly altered. The distinction between the English and the Norman has now completely faded away. But there was a time when, says Creasy, “the very name of Englishmen was turned into a reproach.” And the two nations did not amalgamate without the English making concessions, which involved “sweeping and enduring innovations,” political as well as social. It is no small gratification to learn from the same source that “this intrusion of one people into the bosom of another people” infused into the ruled “a new virtue.” I think it can be scarcely denied that the contact which follows conquest very often turns out to the benefit of the conquered. The chief merit of

British *Raj* in the eyes of many people is that it promises to prove a first-rate civilizing agency. Those officials who raise numerous small difficulties in the way of the "New Light" would be the last persons to deny that in ruling India they are also acting as the pioneers of civilization.

But it is not only with the official world, but also with the world in general, and their own community in particular, that the "New Light" have to settle their account. Their present position is not very enviable. They feel isolated: unsympathetic words and looks dog their steps. By a curious fatality they have come to be regarded (and I fear some of them regard themselves) as the squanderers of their forefather's name. We are fond of talking about the past greatness of Indian Mahomedans; but while doing so we sometimes forget that Mahomedans had ceased to be great before the English subverted their Empire. A history of Indian Mahomedans—of the people and not of the kings—is, I believe, a *desideratum* in literature. But we know enough to be able to say that their condition was bad. The fact that a number of poets and historians and novelists and wits could always be found to grace the court of the "Great Moghal," is apt to give us a mistaken notion of the condition of people in general. India was not made up of Delhis, just as it is not made up of Calcuttas in our own day. The towns, with rare exceptions, were sunk in ignorance, and their condition became worse and worse as the

Moghal Empire approached its fall. I merely mention these facts here. Elsewhere I shall try to show that, far from being the squanderers of their ancestors' name, the "New Light" are a vast improvement on those who did squander it. -

Religion is the chief bond of union between them and the rest of the community. It is useless to disguise the fact that this bond is in need of tightening. It is altogether beyond my power to defend the attitude of the "New Light" in this respect. All I shall attempt is an explanation. The first thing necessary is to ascertain the attitude and the circumstances that have created it. The next step is the practical one of undertaking suitable remedial measures.

By way of preparing the reader for the next chapter, I may say that if Mahomedans suffer their children to grow up in a spurious religious atmosphere, utterly at variance with true religion and with reason, they must be prepared to put up with an ebullition such as exists. In my humble opinion the "New Light" are not more reprehensible than those who prepared the way for irreligiosity by suffering the fair face of Islam to be disfigured by practices and principles abhorrent to common sense.

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## CHAPTER II.

## RELIGION.

To give a list of the evils which are darkening the face of Islam or rather of Indo-Islam is no very difficult task. But the Mahomedan who would do so with a light heart is probably non-existent. In the present instance, the author feels bound to enter into the subject because, in his opinion, it cannot well be left out in endeavouring to explain the position of the "New Light."

I believe evils are divisible into two chief classes :—

(1). Those respecting which there is a difference of opinion among civilized people.

(2). Those against which the civilized world is unanimous. Duelling, for example, is a crime, and, of course, an evil in the eye of law. Nevertheless this mode of vindicating personal character and of avenging private wrongs has supporters in the very heart of civilized society. Gambling again has not only its votaries, but also its supporters, who cannot, for the life of them, see why one should not be allowed to squander his money if he chooses to squander it.

Coming to more familiar and less striking examples. Drinking and smoking are not unanimously condemned; yet we know that there are a

good many persons who regard them as evils.\* The chief peculiarity about evils of this class seems to be that they do not appear as such to their votaries, that they have few advocates among those who do not practice them, and who, consequently, are able to form a less biased opinion. It follows that the latter are probably right ; that a time may come when some of these disputed evils will be relegated to the position of the undisputed ; or when, at any rate, their advocacy, like that of gambling and duelling, will have shrunk into very narrow limits. It is quite possible, for example, that the civilized world may gradually come round to the opinion of Revd. John Todd with regard to that "Indian weed" which he, along with some medical men, so strongly disapproves. And when that time arrives, what will posterity think of us ? They will probably be amazed to find that we ever tolerated it ; that we could be so blind to the injuries which to them are, or rather will be, so palpable. Their attitude, in short, will be similar to that of Modern Europe towards the middle ages, which in various ways were egregiously wrong. What appears to the European school-boy of the 19th Century absurd and incredible, did not appear in that light to the sages of another age.

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\* "If you have ever learned to chew or smoke that Indian weed called tobacco, I beg that you will at once drop all, cleanse your mouth, and never again defile yourself with it. Nicholas Monardus, a German, has written a large folio on the virtues of tobacco ; but it would take many such folios to prove it worthy of a place among civilized men."—REV. JOHN TODD.



What is the explanation? "Look at the progress we have made. Science has advanced. Philosophy has descended to the kitchen. Books have multiplied, &c., &c." True; but don't we find that there were rampant in those times practices (we are concerned with practices alone) of which neither science nor philosophy is necessary to expose the gross absurdity?

"At a chapel in Saxony there was an image of a Virgin and Child. If the worshippers came to it with a good, handsome offering, the Child bowed and was gracious; if the present was unsatisfactory, it turned away its head, and withheld its favours till the purse strings were untied again."

Similarly there was, we are told, a great Nodding Rood or Crucifix at Boxley in Kent, "where the pilgrims went in thousands." Later on "the images were found to be worked with wires and pulleys. "Our Boxley Rood was brought up and exhibited in Cheapside, and was afterwards torn in pieces by the people." Mr. Froude does not tell us whether, amongst the infuriated mob, there were not some who had at one time bowed before the same Rood; but we may be pretty sure, at all events, that those who tore it in pieces knew no more of science or of philosophy than those who adored it. Again, let us hear what the same author says with regard to that well-known practice—the dispensing of indulgences by the Pope.

"The dispensations were simply scandalous. The indulgences—well, if a pious Catholic is asked

now-a-days what they were, he will say that they were the remissions of the penances which the Church inflicts upon Earth; but it is also certain that they would have sold cheap if the people had thought that this was all that they were to get by them. As the thing was represented by the spiritual hawkers who disposed of these wares, they were letters of credit on Heaven." And this is how they were sold by the Pope's Agent on a memorable occasion. "His stores were opened in town after town; he entered in state; the streets everywhere were hung with flags; bells were pealed; nuns and monks walked in procession before and after him, while he himself sat in a chariot with the Papal Bull on a velvet cushion in front of him. The sale-rooms were the churches. The altars were decorated, the candles lighted, the arms of St. Peter blazoned conspicuously on the roof. Tetzel\* from the pulpit explained the efficacy of his medicines; and if any profane person doubted their power, he was threatened with excommunication. Acolytes walked through the crowds clinking their plates and crying—Buy! Buy!" And they bought. Now, these buyers surely had no pretensions to learning, but we must not suppose, at the same time, that they were such absolute idiots, as seemingly they ought to have been, to tolerate such gross absurdities. The simple fact is that practice had warped their judgment, and they could not use common sense; for those they confided in

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\* The Agent.

had taught that it was sinful to use it in religious matters.

Exactly the same baneful influence has been at work among Indo-Mahomedans; and, as a matter of course, has produced similar effects. Those whose duty it was to reconcile the Mahomedans with Islam, and to elevate them up to the requirements of their religion, by constantly appealing to common sense, held that common sense was out of place in all that concerns religion. One result of this teaching was to invest the teachers with unbounded authority; another, to lead the vast majority of the Prophet's followers step by step into practices which Islam and common sense unite to condemn.

Power and prosperity, no doubt, contributed their mite—as they often do—towards pushing Mahomedans aside from the path of righteousness and religion: till a time arrived when the descendants of those who had shed their blood in putting down idolatry became themselves idolaters of the worst type.

No one who writes on this subject is likely to feel the scarcity of suitable illustrations; but we shall content ourselves with one or two typical ones. One of the districts of Oudh—Bahraich—is widely known in connection with the Martyr *Syed Salar*, whose shrine is annually visited by thousands of Mahomedan pilgrims, chiefly, but not exclusively, of the lower classes. This Martyr had

a real existence, which is probably more than can be said of many other so-called Martyrs. He was a near relative of the Ghazni invader, who was so desirous of being known to posterity as Sultan Mahmood, the Idol-broker ; and seems to have been full of the spirit of his illustrious uncle. Arrived where he now rests, his attention was drawn to a tank in the vicinity, which was the object of worship on account of some peculiarities of light and shade, which the worshippers would not ascribe to the reflection of the sun's rays. He seems to have tried to convince them of their error: having failed, the spirited young Prince used the last terrible argument of early Mahomedans—

“And foremost fighting fell.”

Little did he imagine that his remains would be made the object of the same adoration which he was so earnest in repressing ; that profanities of the most repulsive type would be perpetrated over his tomb by his co-religionists.

Because he was young and a bachelor, his nuptials are annually celebrated, and, as a matter of course, also the ceremonies of child-birth ! And this is only one, and by no means the worst, of horrors with which the shrine is polluted ; and after all, this is only one of the numerous places which periodically attract Mahomedan worshippers. “In some parts of India I saw Mahomedan men and women in the act of propitiating the image of the goddess of small-pox during an out-

break of that epidemic. Moreover, the Islam of India has even borrowed something from the superstitions of Vashnavanism and Buddhism. I was shown relics of Mahomed, such as hair of his head, at Delhi and Lahore, while the impress of his foot is revered, if not actually worshipped, much as Hindus and Buddhists worship the footsteps of Vishnu and Buddha."\* Alas! this is truth, and by no means the whole truth. Each province, each city, and in very many cases each quarter of the city, has its own Martyr or Saint to whom all sorts of prayers are proferred, and even sometimes petitions presented. And what is this *Mohurrum* pageant which has come to be regarded such a vital limb of Islam? The saddest of tragedies turned into a low comedy. The most audacious affront that has ever been offered to the chastity of Islam.

Practices of this nature are admittedly not peculiar to India. Nevertheless, it is in this country that they seem to have found their most congenial home. To say that it is all due to ignorance is to dismiss the subject too curtly. Common sense is not incompatible with ignorance; and what is of greater importance in this case, ignorant people are by no means the only offenders. People to whom "ignorant" is not applicable, who would rather be called educated, who constitute high society, and who transact ninety-nine parts of the business of life in a perfectly sensible way,

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\* Professor Monier Williams.

behave themselves, when they come to the hundredth, as mere children, and worse than children.

I for one do not think it is ignorance which is responsible for this state of things. To me it seems to be due to an extraordinary bluntness or paralisation of a very useful faculty—the power of thinking. Martin Luther, who had to face similar evils, is not known to have been very learned, or to have set about his task by educating the people. What he really did was this: he unshackled thought, and set the people thinking. The learning of the age did not help him.\* Common sense certainly was with him, and his success seems to be due chiefly to the fact that he appealed to the very faculty which others more learned, and of greater authority, had systematically repressed. Thought is not easily smothered; but they seem to have effectually repressed it in those days, just as *our* doctors have done in these—by means of the only agent that is too powerful for it—religion.

Religion is a subject to which our thoughts wander in spite of us. Specially was it the case with our ancestors, to whom it was the one important subject, the one absorbing theme. But this important subject, in which they were so deeply interested, was presented to them crusted over with mysteries (not really essential to belief), and

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\*“As to me I have no inclination to risk my life for truth. We have not all strength for martyrdom; and if trouble come, I shall imitate St. Peter. Popes and Emperors must settle the creeds. If they settle them well, so much the better; if ill, I shall keep on the safe side.”—ERASMUS

they were to knock out their brains rather than try to unravel them. Indeed, the beauty of religion—it was represented to them—consisted in its profound mysteriousness and in its being in contrast with the ordinary course of nature. What we would call absurd, and what would certainly be considered as such by any ordinary intelligence, was at once elevated to the high position of the mysterious, which none but the chosen few could understand. People were thus slowly but systematically familiarised with the false, the grotesque, the absurd. They were authoritatively taught to distrust their own minds and to violate common sense. A grave was thus dug for thought, and for religion itself.

By laying emphasis on paralisation of thought, I do not mean to deprive ignorance of its due share. That would amount to dethroning a queen that has reigned over an extensive area. It has often occurred to me that in speaking of the past culture of the Mahomedans, care is not always taken to distinguish Indian Mahomedans from their co-religionists in other parts of the globe. The Mahomedans were cultured. They had libraries and universities. But it does not follow that the brave people whom the mountain fastnesses of Ghazni and Ghore poured forth into the plains of Punjab were not mere warriors. For three hundred years after their advent the country seems to have been too distracted to admit of the growth

of learning. The Pathan and the slave dynasties undoubtedly furnished India with some able administrators and hardy warriors ; but I am not aware that any effort was made to import the learning of which Baghdad, for example, does not seem even at that late period to have been destitute. As a matter of fact, it is not till we come to the glorious period of the Moghals that we meet with a current of culture. It is now that we hear of Madrassas and Khanqas, of endowments and grants-in-aid. It is to this period, too, that some of the most illustrious Indo-Mahomedans—those renowned in literature and law—belong. As far as I know, there were no universities, such as are known to have existed among Mahomedans in other places, although there were at this period schools and scholars. The former, however, seem to have fallen short of the demand, and the latter to have palpably failed to penetrate the folds of surrounding ignorance. It is not without a sense of the profoundest humiliation, arising chiefly from my ignorance of their works, that I venture to speak of these worthies. Nor do I forget that they did not live in the age of the steam-engine and the printing-press. Besides being handicapped in these respects, we know that they were badly served by their lieutenants—the minor Moulvies—through whom their teachings had to filtrate to the populace. But whatever be the causes, ignorance, culminating in the paralisation of thought, was undoubtedly the effect.



This absence of habits of thought first betrayed itself in the private lives of the nobles. They, or at any rate most of them, were such an interesting mixture of piety and impiety that they may be said to have touched both the Poles. Morning prayers would be said, no matter how the night was spent. *Eed* prayers would be duly attended, and other ceremonies performed, though fasts were not kept. And fasts themselves would not be neglected in the fashion of youthful sinners of these days. No; a physician would declare that the patient is too delicate to keep fasts. And has not the Prophet himself enjoined upon Mahomedans the necessity of looking after their health?

These are, no doubt, very commonplace things. Nevertheless, I attach great importance to them. They show Mahomedanism as exhibited in the lives of its votaries on the eve of their political crash. They bring into bold relief early Mahomedans, the founders of Mahomedan supremacy in India.\* They show the descendants of these hardy champions of Islam in their true colours—buying immunities from religious observances, taking refuge behind flimsy pretexts. They show a whole community trying to cheat God. They show them outraging the spirit of His commands, while clinging to forms. They show them playing tricks with their own intellects.

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\* Ten masts at each make not the altitude  
Which thou hast perpendicularly fallen ;  
Thy life's a miracle."—KING LEAR.

Of scepticism—I feel sure—they cannot be accused. As a matter of fact, they have set in this respect a very good example. It is on this account all the more surprising that they should have cut such an ugly figure in the matter of practice. The explanation, however, is that these scions of Islam had made an important discovery. They had discovered through the good offices of guides, no doubt, that there were short cuts to paradise, besides the circuitous road which stupid virtue takes.

One of the most comforting doctrines of Islam is that relating to *toba*. It is one of the concessions which the Prophet, our Redeemer, is believed to have obtained for us from the Almighty. It is to the effect that when a Mahomedan shows penitence, his past sins, or the particular sin for which he shows it, is at once forgiven. Thus, the *toba* of the death-bed procures pardon for life-long sins. It is with pain, and indeed with shame, that I point it out as one of the short cuts alluded to. To transgress His commands and to defer penitence until more have been transgressed, is a shameful abuse of divine mercy. *Haj* itself, which may advantageously be used to bring a sinful career to a speedy close, to open an altogether new page in the book of existence, was often kept in view with a totally different object. Another, and with many a favourite mode of securing the comforts of paradise without having otherwise deserved them, was through the good offices of some venerable man—some *Pir*, whom they honoured with their confidence,

through. I am far from saying that it was never done with purer motives, or never led to better results; but it is the vast majority and not the minority of cases that we have been speaking of all along.

The reader may think he has had enough of them. I am of the same opinion myself; but it must be borne in mind that this is not a sketch, but an outline with ample room for details. There are a good many things that have been purposely left out. Has a word, for example, been said about local evils? India is such a big country; it is divided into so many provinces; each one of these has so many features which are peculiarly its own that it is not to be supposed that it did not develop what may perhaps be termed local evils. In Deccan, for example, it was (*I have been using the past tense throughout; why deprive Deccan of this benefit?*) customary to use *sandi*, a very intoxicating but favourite beverage for *niuz*\* purposes.

“Oh! they were ignorant people,” no doubt; but they must have known as well as any of us that Islam is at enmity with intoxicating stuffs. It strictly prohibits their use in this world; and surely it would not suffer Deccan Musalmans to smuggle them into the other. But these are some of the facts, and the reader can draw his own conclusions. All I desire is, that he may bear these disagreeable facts in mind; while, in the next chapter, I try to explain (and he will please to remember not to defend) the attitude of the “New Light.”

## CHAPTER III.

RELIGION—(*continued*).

IT is with a sense of profound relief that I now invite the reader to a purer atmosphere. Whether I have succeeded in pointing out some of the most flagrant evils and their chief source or not, is quite immaterial. The facts we are concerned with are, that evils exist, and they do not owe their existence to the "New Light." With regard to the first part of the statement, I may say that I have not heard it denied. And have we not, moreover, the best of evidence to back us—the cognizance of our senses? As for the latter, the evils in question stretch too far back into the past to be reasonably connected with the "New Light."

The "New Light" stand divided into two chief classes. With regard to one of them, it would be wrong to say that they have been influenced by the influx of new ideas. The imputation would be a libel, pure and simple. Many an admirer has been heard referring to his friend in these terms:—"Look at him. He has taken his degree; but there is no change in his ideas." I do not wonder. All I say is that indiscriminate critics seldom spare them. Notwithstanding the earnest protests of

both the parties, they are often thrust upon the "New Light;" otherwise they stand by themselves.

It is with the "New Light" proper that we are concerned. Few in numbers, unconscious, possibly, of their own existence as a class, they yet have their distinguishing traits, and are, I believe, to all intents and purposes, a distinct party. I do not feel justified in making a sweeping observation with regard to them, specially in a matter of such extreme delicacy as religion; but certainly they do not resemble those who have hitherto been considered orthodox Mahomedans. I am prepared to go a step further. Many of them entertain serious doubts on points, some of which are erroneously, as I think, represented as vital. They are far from being disbelievers; for disbelieving itself requires belief, and this is the very thing many of them seem to lack.

Surely it is an extremely unsatisfactory state of things; but is an avowal likely to make it worse? No; the real state of things must reveal itself sooner or later; and I for one believe that the sooner the curtain is lifted, the better for all parties.

I do not feel as though I were making a revelation. The attitude of the "New Light" has been an open secret. It was discovered by watchful eyes as soon as it came into existence. At this time it is the topic of every-day conversation, and a load upon every Mahomedan's mind. But it

seems to me that it is not clearly understood, and, what is of greater importance, it is attributed to a cause which is not directly responsible for it. This is unfortunate, inasmuch as it has set those in search of a remedy on the wrong track.

However thin a partition there may be between University education and the real cause, that education, I believe, is not the cause. Our academical course, no doubt, has its peculiarities, but they do not seem to harmonise with the conclusion which is so often drawn, that University education has bred disrespect for religions. There is nothing taught in the class-room which, in itself, may be said to be obnoxious to religion.

Philosophy and science are commonly supposed to be the disintegrating influences. That they are disenthraling, when properly learned, I am ready to concede. But to fix on them the blame of the sad vacillation with which we are face to face is, I submit, to malign them.

Again, those who attribute the present attitude to our system of education, unconsciously pay it a tribute to which I do not think it is entitled. Such an idea must be based on an exaggerated notion of what that system is capable of effecting. Obviously it requires no mean knowledge of a science to base one's attitude upon it with regard to a given question. And where people are taught a little of many things, they cannot learn so much of any science as will enable them to

shake off even the common prejudices on the strength of knowledge.\* I will not undertake to assert that results disastrous to religion may never be produced by the influence of science; but the community which subscribes to such scientific principles must possess many additional advantages of education to which the "New Light" can lay no claim.

Further discussion of this point is rendered unnecessary by the particular character of our Universities, which are believed to be of a very simple description. "After the Indian University course is gone through by a studious student, he is turned out, as if by a machine, to be fit to achieve no result better than that of begging employment from the Government in lieu of having made him what he is." † "The present attempt to give a smattering of science to everybody is a failure. Even those who take the B. Course for their degree cannot spare time enough to gain a decent knowledge of any science." ‡

The conclusion to which we are thus led is that University education must be exonerated of

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\* "Rumford, it is said, proposed to the Elector of Bavaria a scheme for feeding his soldiers at a much cheaper rate than formerly. His plan was simply to compel them to masticate their food thoroughly. A small quantity thus eaten would, according to that famous projector, afford more sustenance than a large meal hastily devoured. I do not know how Rumford's proposition was received; but to the mind, I believe, it will be found more nutritious to digest a page than to devour a volume."—MACAULAY.

† Sir Syed Ahmed.

‡ Mr. Theodore Beck.

direct responsibility in the matter. We are supported by the fact that the attitude in question is not co-extensive with education.

Let us next consider if the absence of theological instruction be the cause. In order to obtain a trustworthy result, it is necessary to throw a retrospective glance at the condition of such education. To what extent was it prevalent ? What was its character ? Do the "New Light" come from the section of the community in which theological education was formerly imparted, and has now been discontinued ? If the answer to the last question be in the affirmative the object of our enquiry is gained. Here is the rub. If, on the other hand, the answer be in the negative, I do not see why the present "godless system" should make much difference.

Now, it is dangerous to make a sweeping observation, specially when it cannot be made to look complimentary. I do not affirm that the system of theological instruction which prevailed among Indian Mahomedans was not the very best that, under those conditions, could be devised. I do not affirm that some of those who studied under that system have not left tangible proofs of their own merit and the excellence of that system. I deny, however, that it was ever resorted to by any section of the community, excepting a particular and numerically small class. The leveling liberal principles of Islam, the simplicity of



its main doctrines, and its general character are, it is true, ill-calculated to create a class of theologians—Mahomedan Brahmins. But numerous circumstances combined to create such a class. Theological instruction in the full signification of that phrase became confined to certain classes, and became hereditary in certain families. The very causes which pushed on the student to eminence when once he had entered the lists, deterred the general run from stepping into the arena with a light heart. The passage was fraught with so many difficulties, and it involved so many personal sacrifices, that the region was, and still continues, to be sacred to an infinitesimal minority.

Theological instruction of a certain character, doubtless, was common enough. This consisted of the learning of the *Koran* by rote, of the inculcation at an early age of the chief tenets, and of enforcing, as far as possible, an observance of them. If this practice has, now-a-days, been departed from, no one but the parents are to blame. But I do not think there has been any departure at all. The same system still exists, and whatever savouring of irreligiousness exists, exists in spite of it.

Some of our boys' earlier years are given, as of old, to the *Koran*. When at last an English alphabet is placed in their hands, it is in great many cases with misgivings on the part of parents. In great many cases, too, parents, afraid

of delectations on the son's part, keep him under personal, or at least, trustworthy control. But does it avail ? If the answer to this question be rather unsatisfactory (and I do not know how it can honestly be otherwise), it is manifest that the theory of discontinuance of theological education being the cause, is equally untenable. We have seen that University education, in itself, is of a pre-eminently harmless character. We have seen that the system of theological education formerly in vogue, as a matter of fact, still exists. Whence this difference, or rather indifference, which we hear so much of in these days ?

We must beware how we condemn University education. It may be harmless and even contemptible in itself; but for the more active of its votaries it opens a vista, which is neither harmless nor contemptible. It introduces them to the region of thought and of common sense. It is true that our *Alma Mater* does not perform this grateful office as uniformly as one would expect. But when a restless spirit takes it into his head to make excursions on his own account, there is nothing whatever to prevent him from entering the aforesaid regions. Here, then, is the key to the whole situation. Common sense is the disturbing element.

I mean that Islam cannot confront common sense ? Quite the contrary. But the Islam in the atmosphere of which we draw our first breath

under the wings of which we are brought up, with which we are face to face every day of our lives, and which, consequently, we come to regard as Islam, can it confront common sense? No; unless it be a perverted common sense. Whether common sense is a good criterion, may be a debatable question. But experience seems to have given judgment. The religion which tends to crush common sense is sure to be vanquished in the long run.

As for Islam, it is one of its chief beauties that it is for the civilized as well as for the primitive society. To both it appeals with equal fervour; to both it conveys an equal and, I believe, an adequate amount of consolation. Hope and fear are implanted in us too firmly to be rooted out altogether; but they admit of being smoothed down, of being elevated above the primitive state. Islam, which appeals very strongly to such feelings, is made to fit in with all the variations which, through education or any other process, they may undergo. A cultivated person, for example, may honestly declare that if an abundance of milk, of honey, of delicious fruits and such like (*Sura* LVI, LXXVI, &c.), are the chief attractions of a paradise, that paradise is not a very sublime elysium. If, in addition to the good things mentioned above, there are black-eyed maids and handsome pages to administer to our comforts, that that paradise is no better than a modern nobleman's palace, where, as often as not, magnificence is seen side by side

with real misery ; nevertheless it is this aspect which our learned doctors insist on presenting to the cultivated mind, because, I am sorry to say, few of them ever take a more sensible view themselves. Ludicrous as it seems even to modern-mediocrity, thousands of sensible men, aye ! and learned men, believe that they will actually eat fruits and drink milk, and be shampooed to rest by Houris in paradise !

It is, doubtless, when such a view is taken of its doctrines, that Islam, which was once the very soul of progress, seems to quail before modern civilization. It is now, too, that an opportunity is afforded to modern critics of assailing the unassailable religion which Mahomed (may God bless him !) taught fourteen centuries hence. But this is not all. Many of the evils which have been referred to in the last chapter arise from this mode of interpretation.

Islam, it is clear, took the only course open of influencing the age to which it had first to address itself. Truth could not and did not brook delay. It did not suffer itself to be inscribed in a book, and the book itself to be placed in an iron safe, to be opened by posterity, when posterity might be advanced enough to comprehend it. Nor did it commit an outrage upon itself by adopting any of the supernatural courses which are ascribed to it. It knew the people it had to deal with in the first instance. It knew the way to

their heads and hearts. Success was the object, and, in order to gain it, certain psychological laws had to be obeyed. Consequently it was not—and yet it was—in advance of that simple age if we look to the spirit and not merely to words.

It must be confessed, at the same time, that the other view, however untenable it may appear to unshackled thought, is entitled to great respect. Though by no means the only view taken by all cultured Mahomedans in all ages, it is certainly the one which has recommended itself to the vast majority of the “faithful” in all times. It is based on an interpretation which, it cannot be gainsaid, descends to us with the sanction of many of the master-minds of the glorious past. But though they performed wonders for their own age, these master-minds failed, naturally enough, to gauge the character of our times. They did all that was necessary, and no more; and who can blame them for not foreseeing that a time would come when religion would keep its hold on cultivated minds by conforming to purely secular researches? And these researches, too, and whatever else there is with which those interpretations are irreconcilable, have not been evolved out of *our* past—the past of which those master-minds are doubtless the brightest ornaments—but have been thrust upon us by events which we actually resisted in their earlier stages, though, naturally enough, to no purpose. As that grim servant of law—the hangman—launches forth the doomed

culprit in the twinkling of an eye from this into the other world, so it must be confessed have we, the Indian Mahomedans, been transported, by the mute and immutable forces of nature from, what corresponded to the middle ages of Europe, into, the very midst of the 19th Century. Here is the danger for the present generation; but here also is the excuse for the past one. Taking this view of the situation, we cannot but exonerate the past generations from all responsibility. This must also, to a great extent, excuse the elders of the present one for not setting their sails to the breeze with greater alacrity. Likewise, and for the same reasons, we must put up with some confusion, and with the party to which it has given rise—the “New Light.” However sudden the appearance of the western civilization in India, the “New Light” themselves are not, I believe, of an abrupt growth. Sufficient time has elapsed to admit of the rise of such a party. The time has arrived, even, when the existence of the “New Light” must be fully recognised, and account taken of them, in whatever may be done. They are not likely to disappear as the world grows older. On the other hand, there are good reasons for believing that, in future, the “New Light” will embrace all that Indian Mahomedans would boast of—intellect and culture.

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In view of this the question becomes of considerable interest : Are those who wish to reform the “New Light,” in respect of religion, on the right

track? The popular-idea on this head seems to be that a smattering of theology should be given to our students along with a smattering of other things; that they should be made to say prayers and keep fasts. Far be it for me to say a word in disparagement. But the question is whether this should be regarded as a good expedient or as an efficient measure? Why not take counsel of experience? If our object be that our young men should keep up appearances, we are on the right track. But if the object be to remove the canker at the core, we are far from the right track. Observances of a faith proceed from belief in that faith; but they do not and cannot generate belief. Again, the mere knowledge of a code of law does not inspire respect for it in most minds. It is the belief that its infringement will be punished that makes it respected. In the absence of the right scheme we must perforce work on the present lines; but let us not overvalue the work, nor misunderstand its real character.

The real causes of this phenomenon lie too deep under the surface to be affected by what is being done. Possibly many of the "New Light" do not themselves know them; but that is because they have never probed their own minds, and not because the causes are not at work. That such a wonderful phenomenon should exist—a number of young men taking up an attitude which has scandalised their elders, flying in the face of tradition, and, according to general belief, also of religion—

that it should exist and have no cause! Juvenile recklessness may be the evil genius of the juvenile and the reckless; but it cannot explain the whole phenomenon. But for the fact that the author has endeavoured to seek out the causes, and has found them to be more or less deep-rooted, there would have been no apology for the "New Light."

I think it may be said with confidence that a religion is as its ministers represent it. The other proposition, that its ministers will represent it as it is, cannot, after the past experience of mankind, be stated with equal confidence. Again, however civilized a community may be, there will be a laity and a clergy, and it will be to the latter that the former will look for lead and light in religion. This will be found to be the case even where sacred lore is within the reach of every person who can read his or her own language. Indian Mahomedans are differently placed. Their sacred literature being in Arabic, is a sealed book even to many of the well educated. It is for this reason that the generality of them are absolutely dependent on their ministers, and consider the form in which Islam is represented by them to be a representation of the genuine Islam. That being the case, any one who knows what abominations are perpetrated under cover of Islam will cease to wonder that a serious ebullition exists among the "New Light." It is unfortunate that every one of us has neither the opportunity nor the capacity for unveiling the statue of Islam.



The "New Light," in particular, seem to be peculiarly unfit by virtue of their education for such a work ; for coating upon coating of classical crust will have to be removed before we get to the Islam "which was nursed in the lap of philosophy."\*

The time may come when some of the "New Light" will have identified themselves with the one or the other of philosophical creeds. But considering that the efforts of some of the ablest men have failed to install these creeds in the place of religion, that the number of their adherents, even in the most advanced communities, is small, it is safe to leave such men out of account. But the demands of the "New Light" are also those of common sense, and we must beware how we treat *them*. Repulsive principles and objectionable practices have had time for consolidation. They have incorporated themselves with Islam in such a manner that it is difficult at this late day to separate the two. In striking at the one, there is great risk of injuring the other. But it is, I submit, still more dangerous to let them alone ; for when their own worthlessness consigns them to the guillotine of reason, they might involve Islam itself in their ruin.

This appears to me a real danger—one against which it is imperatively necessary to guard. We hear it asserted : "Hasn't God said He will guard His own religion." No doubt. But we know that

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\* Hali.

God did not condescend to *advocate* His own religion, but had it advocated by human agency. If there ever was a time in the history of Islam when supernatural aid might well have been vouchsafed, it was in its early stages, when it was struggling for a footing. But the records of this period and of the life of Mahomed (may God bless him !) place it beyond doubt that no such aid was given.\* Mahomed's vicissitudes, his trials, his hair-breadth escapes, his battles, his flights, his defeats and his ultimate triumph, clearly show that this truth had to make its way, like other truths, by divine aid, no doubt, but by purely human agency. And at one time, particularly, it was in great jeopardy. The Prophet's scathing denunciations had lashed the Korashites to fury. The death of his uncle Alu Talib had left him exposed to the full force of their ferocity. Terrible persecution ensued. His few followers escaped to Medina.† But he himself, with Abu Bakr, took refuge in a cavern. "What can we do," said Abu Bakr; "we are but two against a host." "Nay," replied the Prophet; "we are three, for God is with us." Here we have the Prophet's sentiments on the subject; but we must take them along with

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\* "No proof, indeed, has ever been adduced that Mahomed at any time descended to any artifice or pseudo-miracles to enforce his doctrines, or to establish his claim to be one of the Prophets of God. On the contrary, he relied entirely upon common sense, reason and eloquence, and supported by the innate conviction of the inspiration of the Almighty, he continued his work in the teeth of all the opposition which ignorance or fanaticism offered to its progress."—*The Faith of Islam: Mr. Mahomed W. H. Quilliam.*

† A. D. 622, 14th year of the Prophet's career, when he was 52 years old.

his practice. Did he remain hidden in the cavern because he believed that God was with him. No; he issued forth to act, and he acted in a way which affords history, perhaps, the most striking illustration of that well-known maxim : " God helps those who help themselves."

It is a fortunate circumstance that there are Mahomedans living who can make head against the danger which threatens to dissolve the bond which exists between them and posterity. But how many of them understand the situation? The " New Light " are sufficiently miserable without being jeered at. They know themselves too well to be in need of being told that they are unlike their ancestors who bled for Islam. It is time, I think, that an honest effort were made to understand them and their wants.

I do not think that earnest attention has yet been given by Indian Mahomedans, whose desire to preserve Islam at home seems just at present to be overshadowed by their anxiety to spread it abroad, to the big problem which may almost be said to be clamouring for solution. The evil which I have tried to indicate is no bigger than a pebble ; but it threatens to become a roaring cataract. The moral chaos of the renaissance is a matter of history. It is our duty to benefit from the lesson it teaches, and to make the progress of new ideas less disastrous to our people. Whether this will be best achieved by gaining the confidence of the " New Light " or by goading them into rashness, is a

question on which sensible people should be agreed.

It is needless to say that the influences which have rendered necessary the purification and rationalisation of religion, have also battered the walls of the fortress of society ; for among Mahomedans, at least, the fabric of society is based on religion.

## CHAPTER IV.

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 SOCIETY.

THE concluding remark in the last chapter, and my method of treating that subject, may have produced the impression that I would preface my remarks on society with a catalogue of social evils. Such, however, is not my intention. What is once done through necessity need not be repeated ; and what well becomes a reformer may not suit a novice whose only title to be heard is that he describes the battle from the ranks. Moreover, the object of this work is not to admonish society, but to present, in their real guise, certain events which are causing it uneasiness, and which may give it trouble, if not thoroughly understood. The nature of such a work, no doubt, demands a certain amount of plain speaking ; but plain speaking has this great defect, that it very often defeats its own object. At the same time duty must be done "within wisely-traced limits."

It is the duty of an apologist of the "New Light" to show that they owe their existence to causes which invest them with germs of stability and respectability. But this is only one of his duties. His responsibility does not end here, nor when he has

pointed out that in certain respects their attitude is defensible. Every phenomenon, great or small, is similarly ascribable to definite causes. Every community, even the lowest, can be shown, and that with a perspicuity to which this work can lay no claim to be right in one or two points. But does it necessarily follow that that community is not a pest which society ought to try and eject from its bosom ?

It is the imperative duty of an apologist to analyse, as far as possible, the character of the community he elects to defend, to determine its position in society, to gauge the measure of its usefulness, and, above all, to show that its conduct is based on sound principles. And until some such thing is done for the "New Light," they must remain thoroughly unreliable—a mere will-o'-the-wisp.

In the first place, then, we must have a criterion—some determining fact. What is it which invests a community with worth and value ? What is the goal of nations ; the consummation they live and die for ? Is it not civilization ? "And, indeed, does it not seem to yourselves," says M. Guizot, "that the fact civilization is the fact *par excellence*—the general and definitive fact in which all the others terminate, into which they all resolve themselves ?" To reply in the negative is to fly in the face of facts. Since the chief object of all institutions, human and divine, seems to be civilization ; since they are judged with reference to their influence in civilizing, we are justified in taking civilization for

our criterion. The question therefore is, are the "New Light" civilizing themselves? At this point our progress is checked by another difficult question. There are numerous types of civilization; which of them are we to take for our criterion? The Chinese, for example, are far from being an insignificant minority of the human race, and thousand upon thousand of persons consider them the paragons of civilization. Again, *In Darkest Africa* may be a pithy title for a book of travels; but, surely, when His Majesty of Uganda talked to an English traveller about the possibility of a matrimonial alliance between himself and Queen Victoria, His Darkness had no suspicions that the Monarch of the brave people of Uganda was inferior in the scale of civilization to our own gracious Sovereign.\* And his opinion is, probably, the opinion of thousands of our dark brethren. But why go so far? There is a strong opinion here, at home, in favour of Oriental civilization; and the question may be asked—Why not take *it* for our criterion in respect of the "New Light?"

Now, one great difference between the European and the Oriental civilization is that there is a certain uniformity and cohesiveness in the former, while the latter consists of diverse types—types as diverse and even heterogeneous as the Orientals themselves. There is, for example, the Arabian type, which, be it said, has of late given palpable proofs of vulnerability. There is the Turkish type, which, ere long,

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\* *Vide* "Recollections of Africa."—The "PIONEER."

will be scarcely distinct from European civilization. And apart from these, with elements peculiarly its own, is what may perhaps be termed the Indo-Mahomedan type of civilization. The choice practically lies between this type and European civilization ; for not only have the others no claim, but they are also beyond our reach.

Circumstances, which a friend of civilization cannot help regarding auspicious, have placed the "New Light" in close vicinity to a European nation, the civilization of which it is open to them to adopt to the extent and in the manner which may seem best. The extent and the manner, very important considerations by themselves, are not those which here demand our attention. It is the principle which must be considered first. What should be our criterion ? European civilization as represented by Englishmen, or Indo-Mahomedan civilization, specimens of which abound in India, and are held up now and then, I presume, to put the "New Light" to shame. If the former, it is manifest the "New Light" have inaugurated a bright era, and would infuse new life in a diseased body. If the latter, they are a pest, a thoughtless brood, who are aiming at the destruction of old things merely because they are old.

I must confess that the second type is in some danger of receiving unjust treatment at my hands. The worst of it is, that few of us have an idea of what it exactly may have been in its halcyon days. When, however, we consider the conditions



under which Mahomedans of the last generation lived, when their institutions and, what is of supreme importance, the character of some of the latter-day monarchs is taken into consideration, the impression produced is far from favourable. The state of things which, then, reveals itself is by no means such as a community, whose ostensible object is improvement, can be asked to take for its pattern, or with reference to which we should judge them.

It was open to the last generation to reform themselves on a different basis. They could go back to the days of Aurungzeb and Akbar in search of models. These of the new generation are too far removed, too differently situated to do the same. All they can do is to take the last generation itself for their pattern, if a dozen unprejudiced people can come forward to advocate that course. I do not deny—it were unjust to do so—that the dark cloud had its silver linings, but it is impossible to take these few linings as distinct from the black mass for our criterion.

There is an epoch in the history of Indo-Mahomedan civilization when it stood on a level with its present rival. I refer to the time when Akbar occupied the Throne of India and Queen Elizabeth, that of England. No ordinary mortal could then predict that the glow of light which was visible in the East and the West alike, would not alike illumine both the horizons. As a matter of fact, we find, at this period, germs of development in

both societies and in the eastern, perhaps, in a greater degree. Here, side by side, with immense wealth and learning, we discover, at any rate in an influential section of the community, the chief element of civilization—progress; and what is essential to progress—toleration. Whenever thought has seriously suffered in the East, it has suffered through bigotry. It is this that has blocked the way, not of learning but of progress, of civilization, of science. For once, however, in the annals of priest-ridden India, we find the shackle removed, and that by the august hands of the Emperor himself. “The intercourse with Hindus and Christians gradually modified many of his old Moslim prejudices. For example, he began to encourage the art of figure-painting—an objection to which has been in all ages one of the tenets of the iconoclastic religion of Mahomed. In one of his recorded conversations, Akbar is stated to have observed that anything which recalled the works of nature, must be taken as an act of respect to God.” “One of the greatest innovations ever made in the unchanging East,” was the introduction of tobacco. “Akbar after fair experience gave it up; but he would not reject the practice without trial, for all the good things we have,” said he, “must have once been new.” Even in the most unfriendly accounts one traces the germs of social and political reform. “All food was lawful; excess alone was wrong. Prostitution was taxed; polygamy reprovèd. Widow-burning (*sati*) could only take place by the undoubted and persistent

desire of the victim.”\* In his own person, perhaps, he carried the principle too far ; and, doubtless, it must have been unedifying to see the Emperor *bowing* to the “Image of Crucifixion” European fashion, *kneeling* before it Mahomedan fashion, and finally “falling prostrate” Hindu fashion. But we have to remember that to reach the subject the principles of the monarch had to filtrate through several strata, and to encounter modifying influences. At the same time the extent to which they actually influenced the community could not have been small.

A study of Akbar, with reference to what he did and under more favourable circumstances might have done for India, is most interesting. This cosmopolitan Monarch aimed at fusing into a homogeneous whole the multifarious races over which he ruled. His reign of fifty-two years is the brightest era in the History of India.† Thought is free. It is treading the earth in all its majesty. There is a persistent and independent enquiry after truth. All we want is a succession of supporters ; and, depend upon it, neither the steam-engine nor the printing press will be long delayed.

Jehangir is the successor. He is faithful to his father’s principles of toleration when his contem-

\* Keene.

† “ All that was vital and pregnant in the Musalman History of India is, in a manner, centred in his reign and period ; and whatever was at all stable in the succeeding periods, owed its impulse to these times, whose fruit, indeed, is still to be discovered underlying the best portion of the British system of administration.”—KEENE.

porary, King James of Great Britain and Ireland, is denouncing those "dunces fit to be whipped." But the difference between the two countries is that while in the one, germs of development have permeated the people, in the other they have not. In England, thought will gather strength from the opposition of the Crown; in India, it will die out when the Throne from which it, in the first instance, took its rise, ceases to take active interest in its welfare. Jehangir is just and tolerant; but he is essentially a *passive mood*. The child which was nursed in Akbar's lap is poorly for want of nourishment. It is now that history reads to us the stern lesson of the perishable nature of structures built upon the short bridge of life. It is now that one is led to ask himself—Is not the destiny of a nation too sacred a charge for individuals?

Shahjehan the Magnificent succeeds Jehangir; "and the picture of the period," we are told, "is one of prime and palmy days." This is not what can be said of England, which at this period is suffering from civil war. But is the quiet which pervades the continent, different from the contentment which is bread of thoughtlessness? And do not the struggles of the Islanders indicate their earnest desire for amelioration? The outward man is looked after in the East, and the inner one is being attended to in the West. There is wealth here, but not enterprise. There is magnificence, but not corresponding culture. There is learning,

but not thought. People fight for place, but not for principle. And the spirit of progressive administration is nowhere. Akbar is the ideal ; but his favourite distich is totally forgotten :—

“ In outward homage faith is never shown,  
Looks are but looks—truth lies in deed alone.”

Akbar's great-grandson Aurungzeb is pre-eminently a man of “deeds.” But he is not likely to devote much care to the welfare of a purely secular community. It is unfortunate that he should consider it his duty to “minimise the minds” of seventy-five per cent of his subjects. This minimising business never fails to influence the minimisers, *i. e.*, when it does not proceed from minimised minds. Aurungzeb is powerful ; he is feared and respected. But this is another structure on the short bridge of life. He is providing for the Monarch ; but what has he done for the people ? It is the people who counteracts the tendency of the absolute Monarch to degenerate. It is they who preserve the nation at the cost of the monarchy, when the latter absolutely fails. Man has become a power in England. In India the faithful beast is of little importance. Nevertheless, it is they who are supporting the Throne, as will be seen later on, if ever nation encounters nation. There is no anxiety to extend the limits of their knowledge. Who are these merchants from across the sea ? We can go to their country as they have come to ours. Jehangir actually intended sending an embassy ; but Nurjehan would not hear of it, and Asaf was evidently for extirpating the race. In

1631, we are told, ten thousand of them fell in the siege of Hugli ; and four hundred of both sexes were brought as prisoners to Agra.\* However that be, they are a people and have a country. Ingraft on the talents of the reigning Monarch, the Mighty Aurungzeb, the spirit which led his great-grand sire to establish the "four-sided debating room," and, possibly, some of us will receive orders to cross the brine. What a vista !

In this reign history tells us the Indian Mahomedan Empire reached its zenith. But the zenith (history is unequivocal on this point, though not prejudice) proved too dear at the cost. Thought and loyalty had greatly suffered at his hands ; and though the events of Aurungzeb's reign do not comprehend much actual deterioration, they are plainly indicative of subsequent mental and moral ruin.

With the next reign begins the sad story of decline and fall. But the steps in the political downward passage are not so sharply marked as the accelerating deterioration of society. It is simply sickening to peep through the pall which covers society, specially the higher grades, during the period when the Mahomedan Empire was tottering to its fall. Both history and tradition unite in painting it in black ; but tradition paints it blacker than history. No one likes to dance over the form of a fallen friend ; and otherwise, I believe, there

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\* Under Shahjehan, for political reasons.

were the usual silver linings ; but, on the whole, the fact is incontrovertible that the social preceded (perhaps it always does) the political downfall of Indian Mahomedans. We find them, first of all, giving way before the power of militant Hindus. The subjects have not risen so much as the rulers have gone down. Mental has led to moral and moral to physical deterioration. Already "the spider's web is the royal curtain in the Palace of Cæsar ; the owl is the sentinal on the watch-tower of Arasiab." At this juncture "while preparations are being made for the last act of the imperial tragedy," the merchants of Great Britain take the field ; and a battle is fought, not between monarch and monarch, but between people and people ; between thought and thoughtlessness ; between order and chaos ; between civilization and its reverse.

The childhood of civilization, of systems generally, does not accord with the span of human childhood. The fruits of Providence take much longer to ripen than the fruits of the garden. The child, of which Akbar was the parent, never attained boyhood. It was still a child when throttled.

Those who profess to be scandalised by the social renovations to which the "New Light" seem wedded will do well to reflect upon this short and imperfect sketch of Indo-Mahomedan civilization. What was it at its best ? and what during the period of its decline—the period which immediately preceded the age we live in ? Let them compare it

with European civilization, and then, if they like, condemn the "New Light." Not only is it impossible, after considering the whole case, to commend to the rising generation the civilization of their Indian ancestors ; we must actually judge them with reference to the approach they may have made towards European civilization.

The gorgeous East, no doubt, has facinations for lovers of the novel and the picturesque. The flowing robe, the tinselled turban, the courtesy which raises the humblest of God's creatures to a level with Him, and a hundred other things which please the eye and tickle the ear, are taken by such folk to indicate the existence of a civilization. They are mislead by appearances. They forget that all that glitters is not gold. They draw upon the imagination and not upon the judgment, or they would say, as the "New Light" say, fly from the flowing robe and the tinselled turban. The "New Light" are in a position to know the real worth of these materials ; and much that is a pleasant sight to others, is repugnant to them on principle.

The "New Light" have chosen European civilization for their model. The choice is singularly unfortunate in one, indeed in more than one, respect. What we call European civilization, is the growth of centuries ; and the foreigner who takes it for his model, deliberately places himself in a most disadvantageous position. He is like a great European scholar, who approaches a learned Moulvi



with an Arabic alphabet; and thus places himself on a level with a school-boy. The errors he falls into! The difficulty he meets with in pronouncing the simplest words! The apparent impossibility of his ever attaining the right accent! Who would say that he is a great scholar? But is that an argument against attempting the study of Arabic if it is worth studying? Precisely because he is making an arduous attempt, because he is prepared to put up with difficulties incidental to all great undertakings, that man is a great man, and deserves the support of all right-minded persons. Thoughtless people are sure to laugh at him; but there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of by the thoughtless. They make themselves ridiculous, and not the Arabic scholar in embryo.

There is another aspect of European civilization, or rather of its introduction into Oriental societies which I may as well briefly notice. The Oriental country which places itself voluntarily under its influence is in some danger of losing its political independence. Commerce—the trusty pioneer of European civilization—and politics, generally, go together. The neck of the camel is usually followed by the other limbs. The fact is that Oriental countries still afford shelter to many of the abuses which have long since been banished from civilized Europe. The communities which prize independence more than civilization are justified in being wary. They must be careful to

take European civilization in small doses; but they must take it, or it will take them.

If we turn to the Turks, for whom the Indian Mahomedans, educated and uneducated, men and women, have the most genuine sympathy, we find that they are much more Europeanised in matters social than their Indian co-religionists. It goes without saying that European civilization is as alien to them as it is to us; for, like ourselves, they have had a civilization of their own. Nor can we, of India, boast of being more faithful to the Prophet's precepts than the Turk. The difficulties, in the way of reforming Turkish society on a European basis are, moreover, much more numerous than any to be met with in India. We have no frontier to guard; no hereditary enemy to fight every fifteenth year. They have. We are not bound to treat fanaticism tenderly for political reasons. They are. Nevertheless, in spite of the difficulties of which we, secure under the benign rule of our Sovereign, have no idea the Turk is able at this moment to teach us many a useful lesson in European civilization. Listen to the Princess Annie de Lusignan, the estimable apologist of the Sultan. "Under the reign of His Majesty Abdul Hamid II., the condition of the Ottoman Empire might be much better described as one of robust convalescence than of sickness or decline. It is no more than simply stating a perfectly verifiable fact to say that no power in the world has made such rapid and vigorous strides

in the path of recovery and reform as has the Empire of the Sultan during the last ten years. And this is the more admirable and remarkable when we consider the tremendous difficulties and obstacles with which the men, who have been entrusted with its conduct, have been called upon to cope." The list of the difficulties is a long one, and so is that of reforms inaugurated by the *Kaliph* with the approbation of the *Shaikh-ul-Islam*.

"It is almost a commonplace of social philosophy," says the Princess, "that the measure of a nation's civilization may be taken by noting the condition of its women, and the status of women in south-eastern Europe is often pointed out as indicating the very low-water mark which civilization has reached under the rule of the Turk \* \* \* \* It would, of course, be idle to deny that the European lady of 'society' does enjoy advantages of position and education superior to those of the consorts of the men of the upper classes in Turkey. How long the former will be able to boast their advantages, it is difficult to say, probably for some generations yet, for the Turkish sister has much lee-way to make up; but the good work has been undertaken by the resolute hand of Abdul Hamid, and the progress of female education made under his reign is little short of the marvellous.

"Not so many years ago it was next to impossible to meet a Turkish lady who could read a book, or take a part in anything like a rational conversation. I well remember, when I first visited the

East, so short a time as nine years ago, the immense astonishment of my fair Turkish friends, when they found me with a book in my hands and actually reading it, and the sort of gossip and idle chatter which one used to overhear among 'the beauties of the harem' were not such as to give one a very exalted notion of their knowledge or capacity. But now as I go to and fro on the Bosphorous steamers, I hear the Turkish ladies (the women who, the average Englishman believes, are never allowed to come from behind the seraglio curtain) discussing the current literature, questions of the hour, and altogether talking like rational human beings."

Of course, this is a fuller realization of the principles of European culture than any to be witnessed in India, than any which the "New Light" are yet prepared to advocate.

It is not proposed to accomplish in months what can properly be accomplished only in years. Our progress must be slow in order that it may be enduring. It does not take long to bring about changes. Months have been known to demolish the work of centuries. But there is nothing durable in nature which is not made by the slowest degrees. The flowers of the summer are as ephemeral as the warmth which produces them; but the oak, the growth of centuries, survives the rise and fall of Empires. The dominion of Alexander, raised in a few campaigns, perished within the life-

time of those who witnessed its birth : the Roman Empire, formed in a succession of ages, endured a thousand years. The fact is—and the “ New Light ” are aware of it—that hasty reform is dangerous and baneful.

I have heard, and seen in print, very grave charges against the “ New Light.” But to the best of my knowledge they are not accused of an extensive importation of things European. As a matter of fact, the chief charge against them is that reform with them seems to have stopped short with the style of dress. I believe many of them do consider attire an important item of reform ; and of these many, there are some with whom this plagiarism of the European’s exterior is the end and aim of reform. With these latter I have little sympathy. With regard to the former, I have to say that dress is to be taken as an index of their heart, indicative of the line of reform to which they stand pledged.

As long as the dress commonly worn by Indian Mahomedans continues to be what it is, and it is one which religion certainly does not countenance, its adoption or rejection must rest on personal sentimental grounds ; and these seem to me to favour its rejection. It is associated with some of the traits which superseded the manliness of Mahomedan character and with court revels.

One of the most curious arguments I have ever heard is that sometimes urged against the adop-

tion of European costume by Indian Mahomedans. European dress, it is said, is much more artificial. If, acting on this hypothesis, we go on rejecting artifice after artifice, my belief is that we shall soon find ourselves led back to times when, untrammelled by modern civilization without latter-day scruples, our ancestors roamed free on God's earth. To consume one's meals with the help of knife and fork is certainly an artificial process; but it is not, on that account, less refined than its rival.

For the rest I can say that I have found underneath the *fez* many valuable ideas which, though very often vague, are yet important as harbingers of a better future. Sympathy, as understood by us, moderns, was a thing unknown to Indian Mahomedans. With them it was an obligation which extended to religious objects, but left co-religionists altogether in the cold. Hence, so many religious endowments and splendid mosques. Hence, also, the meagre support they gave to secular institutions. With the "New Light," however, sympathy, nation, subscription and education are household words—words which are always in their mouth, and very often in their heart.

This is certainly not much; but it is, I submit, much better than suicidal indifferentism and active hostility. Education, specially, is the subject on which the "New Light" are very keen; and considering that education must precede all reforms, their inactivity in other spheres is not only

excusable, but also, to some extent, commendable. A long time will yet pass before Mahomedans are in a position to extricate their thoughts from the problem of education. Education is their first and greatest want, and must be provided for in an effectual manner before they can safely allow their energies to cover a larger area.\*

\* As having a direct bearing on this subject, I venture to append one of my printed speeches.

## CHAPTER V.

SOCIETY—(*continued*).

LOOKING from the sublime cloud-land of European civilization, one is apt to form too low an estimate of the "New Light's" achievements. Infinitely less importance, for example, is attached to purely external changes than I believe is justifiable under the present circumstances. The matter of dress is certainly insignificant in comparison with solid improvement—the alteration of the inner man. But in the present condition of Indian Mahomedans, the frock coat (which is very often only an apology for one) and the *fez* (an inferior head-dress from an æsthetic point of view) mean a victory over the demon of bigotry. By subjecting himself to unpopularity, the fez-wearer often discovers a fund of moral courage, which, let us hope, will in time be applied to better causes. In reclaiming the nation from an apathetic state of coma, the frock and fez, moreover, act like a specific. To those who have no stomach for articles and lectures (and they are the majority), every fez-wearer is a walking lecture. They fret and foam at the innovator, but they are roused. Apart from this, I support external changes on principle. I believe they will turn out



to the benefit of the inner man in the long run. It can scarcely be denied that they are *suggestive* of moral amelioration—suggestive of imitating the European in some of the qualities which have made him what he is. “All that is said as to the authority of examples, of customs, of noble models,” says Guizot, “is founded upon this only: that an external fact leads, sooner or later, more or less completely, to an internal fact of the same nature, the same merit; that the inward is reformed by the outward as the outward by the inward; that the two elements of civilization are closely connected the one with the other; that centuries, that obstacles of all sorts, may interpose between them; that it is possible they may have to undergo a thousand transformations in order to regain each other; but, sooner or later, they will rejoin each other. This is the law of their nature, the general fact of history, the instinctive faith of human race.”

Another misconception which exists on this subject is that the supporters of the changes purpose to abandon their own nationality; to change as it were their national identity. I need hardly say that the allegation is as groundless as the theory would be impracticable. Because an Oriental has taken to English style of dressing and English mode of living, he does and cannot thereby become the man whose nation founded the British Empire.

If there is one thing more than another which the “New Light” are seeking to promote, it is the feeling of nationality. In this they have succeeded

to a great extent, inasmuch as they have banished from their own limited circle the petty sectarian differences which are gnawing at the heart of the Mahomedan nation. There is no desire anywhere to change the place ; all they want is to change the condition. Reflect, they say, on the causes which have led to the extinction of some of the races of antiquity ; on the causes which have brought about your own ruin,—moral, intellectual, physical and financial ruin. Eradicate those causes. “According to the Darwinian theory,” wrote Sir Syed Ahmad a few years ago, “the baboon has developed into man, by slow degrees of progress. I see that deterioration has set in among us, and unless it is checked, man will deteriorate into animal ; and our posterity, O ! Mahomedans ! will be seen skipping from one branch to another.” Addressing the students of his College in 1876, he told them it was essential that they should preserve their religion and the fine traits of their nation ; otherwise, said he, “you may become the stars of heaven, but what is it to us ?”

It is impossible to overestimate the value of this sage advice. It is specially the duty of those who can influence the rising generation, to impress upon them that they are not called upon to spurn their own people, or to imitate the bad points of their models.\* Perhaps, the best friends the “New

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\* “Keep all thy native good, and naturalise  
All foreign of that name ; but scorn their ill ;  
Embrace their activeness, not vanities :  
Who follows all things, forfeiteth his will.”—

Light " have, are those Europeans—I am sorry they are few—whose advice sometimes savours of reactionary principles. "Look," they say, "for what is good and beautiful in your own people. Look for it, and preserve it. You, gentlemen, seem to think that we, Europeans, ought to be imitated wholesale. That is not our opinion, and surely you' will credit us with knowing our own people." The "New Light" credit them with much more—with sound sense, with good intentions. Centuries of struggle between the old and the new have swept over the head of Europe. Causes, which it is beyond the scope of this work to mention, have propelled it on to what most people call a state of civilization ; but it is perfectly true that there is ample room for the same causes to be still at work. Nevertheless, in spite of the need of further improvement, this must be said on behalf of European civilization. A healthy restlessness is preferable to quiet. The former leads to reform (the need of which will exist in the most advanced societies), the latter to ruin. As far as appearances go, they are decidedly unfavourable to Europe. Every ugly phase of European society is written about, spoken about, denounced from the pulpit and the platform. The public mind is filled with disgust. Here, in India, abuses exist which are by no means inferior to their European contemporaries ; but scarcely a ripple ever disturbs the calm surface of Oriental society. Appearances are misleading in the extreme. Further, it should be remembered that by keeping

in close confinement one half (I mean the better half) of society, we summarily lessen the complexity of social problems. Whether this proceeding is just in itself, is for the reader to decide.

Nor is there occasion for fearing that the tendency of the "New Light" is towards a wholesale destruction of native traits. Conservatism is a predominating element in the Mahomedan national character. At present this spirit is unpopular with the "New Light" because it has not come forward to take its proper place among beneficent influences, and because it has leagued itself with bigotry. But it seems too deep-rooted to be in danger of extirpation; and we may look upon it as a guarantee against rapid or rash innovations. The really good and beautiful, too, are commonly credited with the power of preserving themselves.

" You may break, you may shatter the vase if you will,  
The scent of the roses will cling round it still."

The "New Light," while they cannot disregard warnings with impunity, can have no doubt as to their proper place in society. How can they act as a clog on the wheel when innovations are being rejected merely because they are innovations. There is doubtless very great danger of a too rapid advance now that radical ideas have found their way to India. But apart from politics, the time has not yet come for showing the red flag. When stock is taken of the social reforms introduced during the last quarter of a century, it is their paucity rather than abundance which strikes us. I invite

comparison of whatever of European origin is to be found in the social sphere *all over India* with any similar importations in other spheres—in politics, for example. While there is a good deal in the latter which would satisfy reasonable continental politicians, the most unreasonable European reactionist would discern room for radical social reforms. He will at once see the very low-water mark that civilization has really reached in India. He will see that the “Indian nation” has sprung up long before the seed for it has been thrown. It really looks, from the stand-point of a social reformer, as if the cart has been placed before the horse. It does not look as if we have been making the right use of our time and talents, as if we are on the track for fusing into a whole the peoples of India. The political platform, it seems to me, is not the place where we can meet at once. The desire of effecting social amelioration ought to be at present the proper bond of union.

It is fortunate for our political pretensions that an impenetrable stratum intervenes between our homes and the public gaze; but, whenever accident raises the wail of mystery, the question of social reform stands out to claim precedence. It is on such occasions one discovers that what is common at present to the multifarious races of India, is not that enlightenment which is said to have prepared them for the reception of advanced political institutions, but this, that they are alike obdurate, impenetrable, hide-bound by tradition and prece-

dent. Here, then, is a boundless field for the exercise of patriotism.

In politics we have to take count of foreign friends ; but social India is absolutely our own. Why should it be true that the one is much better off than the other. A question of social reform, affecting an important section of the Indian community, is at this time occupying our thoughts. Many people say a social evil exists;\* others deny it ; but nobody has, I believe, shown that the reform proposed is likely to be materially injurious. Why should it be necessary for the patriotic Parsee gentleman, the champion of the Hindu girl, to go all the way to England to advocate the reform ? Because, however fit the great "Indian nation" may be for taking into its own hands political affairs, its competency for dealing with social questions on their merit is apparently not such as to command a reformer's confidence. Hence Mr. Malabari's appeal to English men and women in the *Times* newspaper. At this moment, while the great "Indian nation " is making preparations for a Political Congress, foreign philanthropy is offering to look after their homes !

Progress on these lines is very unsatisfactory, leaving, as it does, the canker at the core wholly untouched. The maxim of the " New Light " is the

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\* A petition, presented to the Viceroy by lady-doctors, " was supported by authentic instances of the most revolting character,—instances of outrages entailing death, mutilation or misery through after-life on each of the luckless girl-victims."—" PIONEER."

very commonplace one, that "charity should begin at home."

Progress, of course, carries with it its own commendation. But the one just noticed is greatly retarding social progress by monopolising available talents. We are not so bad politically as we are socially. Turn the tide ye powers into the more profitable channel, and a regenerated India—an united India—will greet your vision.

"India has never, within the period of history, been a nation. It has been an aggregate of various tribes, distinct communities, and petty despotisms, of which now one, now the other, shot up into ephemeral importance or decayed with the accident of the hour, with the success of some military adventurer, and the degeneracy of the heir \* \* I have a vision of an India where the science of the West has removed impediments to communication ; where the consequent increase of trade has diffused material prosperity ; where English energy and capital stimulate improvement in every district ; and where the native population, with expanding ideas and improving intelligence, are taught by the education of schools and of events of books and railways to know us and to know one another, and are gradually trained in the management of their own local affairs for those of a wider area ; so that India may at length have what it has never yet had—a political life—and at length be—what it has never yet been—a nation."—MR. S. LAING, *Finance Minister*, 1861.

While all generous minded persons, Asiatic and European, are agreed that the happy consummation alluded to in the above passage is worth striving for, opinions differ as to the *modus operandi*. I claim for the "New Light" that their's is the right method. Notwithstanding the apparent love of superficiality, which critics detect in them, they are the people who are trying to improve society from the *inside*.

I am not blind to the fact that there are communities which, according to my criterion, stand higher in the scale of civilization than Indian Mahomedans. Such, for example, is the Parsee community. One would be sorry, indeed, to stand in the way of their political progress, as long as it does not entrench on one's own interests, and the best interests of the majority of Indian communities. But, as matters now stand, I claim for the "New Light" that they are justified in being "conservative" in politics and "liberal" in the matter of social reform.

The "New Light," unless I have grossly maligned them, are on the eve of a tough struggle. At this juncture, the advice cannot but be welcome to them, that they must not take a big leap into the dark. But after considering the whole question, philanthropy will not fail to see that its place is not that of the clog on the wheel.

The programme of the "New Light" is a moderate one, consisting mostly of items which are above



commendation. It will be considered by some superfluous to be still crying for education ; but education is actually the first and the most important event on the list. The course of the "New Light" is full of so many impediments, the difficulties with which they have to wrestle are so deep seated, that the stoutest and most earnest of them have been seen, at times, giving way to gloom. In this, however, they are surely mistaken. They, probably, attach too much importance to their present unpreparedness or their own numerical insignificance ; and too little to the civilizing forces which are arrayed on their side. These forces, however difficult to define and determine, yet have an existence, and are, so to speak, responsible for civilizing the world. What they have accomplished since the ancestors of the modern Aryan drank the *soma* juice, is an unmistakable indication of their potentiality. These forces to which the "New Light" have unconsciously done fealty, the stirrup of which they are bound by all that is good and honourable to hold, will not play them false, unless the powers of heaven have decreed the destruction of Indian Mahomedans.

Mahomedans are scattered all over India ; but still, to all intents and purposes, they are a nation having identical interests. Though only a fourth part of the whole population, they are the largest single community. But their large numbers render skilful manipulation all the more necessary, and this is impossible until the "New Light"

knit themselves together as earnest men who have real work to perform.

The opinion exists in certain quarters that by virtue of their advanced ideas and the consequent divergence from what is popular, the "New Light" are unfit for giving effect to practical measures. It is, therefore, urged that they should retrace their steps. Evidently, these friendly councillors have no very high opinion of the "New Light." Those of the latter with whom blind imitation is the only motive of action, will do well to consider the well-meaning advice; but those with whom life is a serious business, who have a higher opinion of themselves and of the destiny of man, are justified in looking upon it as an insulting proposal. They have a right to insist that the world shall take them as they are.

Mr. World must not take it amiss. It is no challenge, proceeding from mere bravado. It is a vindication, feeble one perhaps, of the principle upon which progress rests. The fact of their being few, of their being unpopular, does not prove that the "New Light" are in the wrong; while the first retrograde step, even were it practicable, would be a blow to their reasonable expectations and to much besides. The present outcry against the "New Light" is in no way different from what usually happens when a change is introduced in the sphere of society. Every change thus introduced has to encounter adversaries and to undergo opposition; but for perseverance and moral courage,

so essential to carrying out reforms, the world would have been much poorer than it is. What is the usual cry of the opponents of a change? They say it does not ameliorate, does not regenerate, that, in short, it is not a reform. For reformers to show the least sign of timidity at such a crisis is to convict themselves.

Above and over these considerations, the theory of the "New Light's" unfitness for practical work does not seem to rest on unimpeachable ground. Surely it is not necessary that the whole lot should band themselves together, and like the militant missionaries of "General" Booth, go about the country beating the drum. I fear me *that* is not possible, even were it necessary. Poor erring mortals! they have a stomach as well as a cause to look after. But supposing one in every thousand devotes himself to serving the nation, and the rest do not cry "Down with him, he is satan incarnate," would not that be a vast improvement on the existing state of things? "Yes; but one expects a better result," and a much better result it is safe to promise.

No longer to indulge in generalities. Education is the cause to which the "New Light" are expected to devote themselves; and a doubt is expressed whether they are not too unpopular to influence the rich. It is a pity that such a thing as education should hinge on money; but the *rupee* is really its life and soul. The need of it has been much increased by the fact that we have to erect colleges

of our own ; none having been bequeathed to us, and none of the Government ones being quite suitable ; hence the educationist's well-known hankering after money. Those who can give him most valuable help, mostly consider education a mere fudge, which, thanks to their ancestors, they can afford to ignore ; others consider it a matter of great importance ; but they unfortunately can offer little pecuniary assistance. The plain duty of the educationist, under these circumstances, is to influence the rich, so as to bring them round to a higher opinion of education, and a fuller appreciation of its importance. Until this is done, progress in education will not be steady ; for money will not be forthcoming through spontaneous philanthropy, but will depend on the exertions of some extraordinary individual, or what has been such an influence for good—official interest. These are both slender threads by which to hang such a cause. No community can be sure of always having an extraordinary man, or of commanding official interest.

The educationist has a duty to perform by the rich, not only because they are able to furnish him with money, but also on their own account. It is his duty to point out (and never tire of doing so) the risk they run by excluding education from their domestic circle, and from the sphere of their public and private charities. The day is not yet come, but it should come, when monied men may realise the importance of assisting the educationist from motives of pure philanthropy. Whether it shall be

hastened by flattering their prejudices against any innovation, is a question on which there ought surely to be no room for difference.

As matters stand, it is difficult to say whether education or the "New Light" are more unpopular. Certain it is that a pious Maulvi, perfectly in accord with his audience on other topics, may not always talk of education with impunity. Whatever may be the best way of meeting particular difficulties, in general, it is evident that the educationist has to combat deep-seated prejudice. In view of this the advice, that he should compromise with it, seems to be one of dubious wisdom. Philanthropy no doubt has its claims; but it is extremely doubtful whether dissimulation is permissible in furtherance of them.

Of course it is necessary to observe moderation. But what seems of supreme importance is, that the "New Light" should present a firm front. It is essential that they should know themselves and each other. Divisions and differences, it is absolutely necessary, there should be none. They have to carry out a series of reforms. A good deal has been done in the matter, but much more has still to be accomplished. What has been done is *for* the "New Light." What has to be done is *by* them.

There are many gentlemen who are eminently fit for practical work. Having earned a well-deserved relief from official duties, they have time enough for listening to the dictates of philan-

thropy. *They* are not unpopular. *They* have no career to commence. Is it too much to hope that they will co-operate?

By extending their support to the "New Light" they can exercise an abiding influence on the future of their nation. Neither indifference nor active opposition can retard the march of European civilization. Neither denouncing nor deriding can avail; but it is feasible to obtain a voice in the matter of reform by conceding to the "New Light" some of their moderate demands. Much of the heart-burning, too, which the "New Light" here and there are accused of having caused, can be avoided in future, if the future, which is not exactly like the present, can be conceived under the present circumstances. As it is, the situation is decidedly a grave one for the guardians of domestic felicity.

We can easily understand that for a long time to come the majority of the "New Light" will continue to submit to the existing domestic conditions. But events have occurred and are occurring which indicate that the tenure of these conditions is fast approaching its end. To put up with a home circle so utterly at variance with the outside world that the 14th century may be said to be intact in one place while the 19th is approaching its close in the other, is a hardship which it is humane and wise to mitigate. Oppression breeds discontent, even downright revolt, and though oppression and revolt are commonly heard of in connection with politics, home circles are equally liable to both.

## CHAPTER VI.

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CONCLUDING REMARKS.

THE immediate result of the introduction of new ideas in a dilapidated society is generally such as is calculated to discredit civilization. The Italy of the 15th and the France of the 18th century are pregnant with lessons which reformers, whether social or political, cannot afford to ignore. These epochs mark distinct periods in the history of mankind ; but the most ardent admirer of the era which they inaugurate cannot think of them without conjuring up much that is loathsome to the feelings and hateful to morality.

The web of circumstances which makes the immediate consequences so sad is, no doubt, very intricate. But, in the main, it is not incognizable. Toleration, as I have said elsewhere, is a necessary preliminary condition of progress, and toleration means the removal from thought of all political and social shackles. Whenever in the life of a nation old ideas begin to be displaced in favour of new ones, a consciousness of individual freedom and of power, proceeding from toleration, is usually discovered to be concomitant with change. This, then, affords the explanation we require.

Experience is requisite, not only for the proper use of limbs, but also of faculties; and as in the one case so in the other, experience comes of time and of use; and is, I am afraid, preceded by misuse. It is but natural for thought to indulge in frolics after feeling for the first time in its career that it is a free agent. It is but natural for it to fight shy of all shackles. To recognize restraint, to distinguish between liberty and license, belongs only to maturity and experience. The prisoner but recently released from *durance vile* feels the genial current of manhood running in his veins with a pit-pat, to which, in the close atmosphere of the dungeon, he was unaccustomed. He wants to taste of all from which the grim prison walls had so long kept him aloof; and, in his anxiety to emphasise the fact of his freedom, he often does many a childish, many a foolish thing. Very similar is the case with newly-released thought. It cannot but see that among the things which, till recently, were beyond its reach, there are a good many that are quite harmless. Many things were forbidden which ought never to have been forbidden; and many things were permitted which ought never to have been allowed. In its anxiety to avail itself of the harmless, it is very often led to indulge also in the injurious. Still haunted by the nightmare of intolerance, it disregards the partition between false prejudice and moral scruples.

A moral teaching, good in itself, becomes very often associated with people who, in the light of



new ideas, are discovered to have been hypocrites ; and the indignation thus aroused against them involves in its indiscriminate fury their teaching also. Indignation and feelings akin to it are so vastly different from discrimination that innocence suffers with guilt merely because of their having been mixed up together.

These are some of the evils to which a youthful community, trying to break loose from intellectual trammels, is particularly liable. Indeed, there are people who believe that a state of society, where these would predominate, *must* always precede a better, a more settled condition. The two "fever epochs of modern history," which, in the language of Vernon Lee, "gave back truth to man, and man to nature at the expense of temporary moral uncertainty and ruthless destruction," may be referred to as cases in point. How far the circumstances of these periods are analogous to those which surround the "New Light" at the present day, is difficult to say. But I cannot help remarking that while there is much that is different, there is also a good deal which is analogous.

Here, among Indian Mahomedans a new generation has sprung up, which is trying to free itself from the slavery of effète ideas. Causes, the general character of which is quite obvious, have landed it in the midst of toleration, of liberty. Liberty of a very high order once existed among

their co-religionists in Arabia; but it is for the first time in the whole range of history that a growing section of the *Indian* Musalmans is self-cognizant. The situation is obviously a critical one; and I should be guilty of gross negligence were I to abstain from urging the utmost circumspection. The light vouchsafed to us has already shown itself to be no mere moonshine. The coolness, which it has created between the old and the new schools, is itself an evil of no small magnitude. It is this which is retarding useful reforms by rendering everything savouring of the new light obnoxious to the old school. It is this which is engendering a certain spirit of reckless disregard in the one for everything new, and in the other for the old.

The consequence is sad to relate. Many a reform, the advisability of which is admitted on all hands, is hanging fire through the suicidal indifference of the men of the older school, while the more active of the "New Light" are contemplating steps for which society, in my view, is not yet prepared. The former, for example, are either hostile or indifferent to female education; while in certain circles of the latter a movement is maturing, which would affect the *purdah* system itself.

Of course, it is the spread of new ideas which has rendered the opening of female question unavoidable; but in spite of this and of my own sympathies, I cannot help regarding the necessity

as one of the dangerous offshoots of the new civilization. Few intelligent Mahomedans are opposed, for example, to female education; but I am convinced that society will receive a succession of the rudest shocks before it can be brought to realise the necessity of practical work. When, in the last chapter, I referred to heart-burnings and to home circles being liable to revolts, I had in my mind definite instances of paternal heart-burnings and of filial revolts. Even as I write a certain ominous rumbling reaches my ears, which is important not as a solitary instance, but as one the frequent repetition of which is most probable.

Never before in the history of Indian Mahomedans was the difference between the status of the two sexes so marked as at present. And never before did an Indian Mahomedan expect so much of his consort as the educated youth of the present day. The consequence is, that he is frequently led to disappoint his parents by running counter to their wishes in the important matter of marriage. Of course, such a course causes heart-burnings. It amounts, for one thing, to taking away from the parents what has hitherto been regarded their dearest prerogative. But while the bulk of sympathy will naturally side with the parents, there are probably hearts which can feel for the son also. His selfishness may be reprehensible; but it is doubtful whether an educated, unprejudiced jury will not acquit him. To unite one's self for life with a person of the status of the average Maho-

medan girl, at the dictation of parents, is apt to appear to some people of refined sensibilities as though it were the courting of death in life. It is not by reproving the delinquency of the son (and possibly the parents are quite as selfish in pressing their views upon young men as the latter are in demurring), but by improving the condition of our girls that these difficulties—the natural outcome of the spread of education among males—can be surmounted. In this way, too, we can gain over the sympathy of all reasonable people, and curb the dangerous proclivities of the unreasonable.

Of the capabilities of the average Mahomedan girl all who know her have an equally high opinion. Mother Nature has been generous to her in respect of mental as well as external endowments. Verily, if ever the time came for the *zenana* walls to give up their wards, the world would be surprised to see what wealth of intellect and of beauty had been lying behind those sullen enclosures. The prospect is doubtless most enchanting. It means the emancipation of our women. It means, amongst other things, that justice has been done, at last, to the weaker sex. It means that the power of the nation (for good and for evil) has doubled itself without any external accession ; that the missing link of life has been supplied, and the happiness of both sexes increased a hundred-fold. But in spite of all that may be urged in its favour, the prospect belongs rightfully to a remote future,

so much so, indeed, that in opening the question at present, we shall be entrenching on ground which ought to be reserved for our grandchildren.

A very different view ought, in my humble opinion, to be taken of education. The latter is absolutely necessary, not simply on account of its intrinsic merit, but also to prevent the sword now hanging over them from falling on the heads of our girls. The difference between the intellectual status of the two sexes, as I have said, is most marked, and in one respect, at least, unprecedented in the history of Indian Mahomedans. *He* was never so unintelligible to *her*, and she never more unfit for understanding him. What he expected of her, she was equal to affording, and the contentment was mutual. It must be very different now when nursery existence has become a term of reproach, and the thirst for intellectual society has increased in the one sex without any corresponding change in the other. As to the thirst for intellectual society, it is, no doubt, in a measure natural to some minds, and was, therefore, never altogether absent. But its gratification is now expected from a quarter where it was seldom sought for before—the quiet recesses of home. Nor can we forget that the questionable method of gratifying such tastes by choosing consorts from the ranks of those who acquire similar tastes in the school of social degradation—a method so common once—has now come to be justly abhorred.

The position of the "New Light" in this respect is one which calls for sympathetic attention. The generous reader can have no sympathy for those who regard their vexations with stolid indifference; or blame them for bringing home ideas acquired elsewhere. What can be more inconsistent, more unnatural than for them to forget their John Stewart Mill, as soon as they cross the threshold of home. If there is one thing more than another which honest people may heartily detest, it is shamming such as is, unhappily, very common among certain sections of the educated classes. They hang upon the pegs the clothes associated in our minds with the advocacy of advanced political ideas, and never touch them till they come out to make another appearance on the platform.

There is no better criterion for judging a nation than the condition of its women. It is the one point on which men, at a certain stage of higher existence, are most sensitive; and the measure in which they may have subdued this sensitiveness is the measure of their onward progress. Even in the most advanced communities women have considerable lee-way to make, and it is doubtful whether they will ever be able to fill up the gap caused in the preceding stage—the stage which lies between a primitive state of society and civilization. It is this stage which nations find it most difficult to cross which is, in fact, seldom crossed without those terrible agents of Provi-

dence—internal dissensions, conquest, and fire and faggot. People consider their measure of progress at this intervening juncture as full and adequate. While their own superiority over the barbarous is so obvious, they sneer at the pretensions of a higher civilization. But there *is* a higher civilization, all the same; and those who are permitted to have glimpse of it cannot afford to join in the sneering.

To premature steps of all sorts, of course, I am strongly opposed. But I do think that the present is the proper time for taking female education earnestly in hand. The reasons which have led me to this conclusion are, no doubt, apt to appear somewhat queer; but were female education necessary merely on theoretical grounds, I for one probably would have held my tongue. I know full well that the Mahomedans, as a nation, are not at present in the mood for adopting anything new, which circumstances of practical necessity do not force upon them.

The question of the education of males has recently taken a very remarkable turn. People who, in all probability, would still have slept over the question if they only could, are becoming alive to its importance out of sheer necessity. The necessity has not risen high enough to reach the wealthy portion of the community. They are still surveying with half perturbed calmness the struggles of smaller fry. But it is only a question

of time. The difficulties which would complete their perturbation are no doubt different from the bread-and-butter difficulty; but they will prove equal to educating the rich out of their lethargy.

Very different is the footing on which the question of female education stands. Religion, history, tradition are in its favour; but being unsupported by a necessity, which would make itself felt by the old and the new school alike, the voice of the respectable trio is audible only to a few. The purest patriotism, the most thorough-going sympathy, the highest sense of duty and equity are requisite for appreciating the value of female education at the present juncture.

Some of the necessities which instigate us to act in this direction I have already mentioned. Of course, they are vastly different from those which are compelling action in the education of males; but they are, nevertheless, of great moment. Education can do a good deal for a boy. But it cannot fill up the gap which is caused in childhood. The start which a European *child* gets over an Oriental *child* is essentially the feature which ever after distinguishes the two. And the loss of life which is ascribable to the ignorance of mothers!

The "New Light" are not ashamed of being alive to the importance of this and the other questions touched upon in this book. They are some of the most important that have ever been thrust



by the civilizing agencies of Providence upon the attention of communities. Unhappily, awakenings, such as the one for which I have patched up this apology, are always followed by internal differences, and I suppose the "New Light" must submit to general law. We have heard a good deal *about* them, but little *from* them. I now invite them to let it be known that they possess a set of principles and of opinions to which they find themselves compelled to cling.

## APPENDIX.

LADIES & GENTLEMEN,—I deem it a great honour that I should have been permitted to appear on the stage along with actors whose consummate acting has earned your approval and admiration. But the character in which I appear before you is a somewhat novel one. Ladies and gentlemen, I represent presumption; I am afraid I am presumption personified. In thrusting myself upon your attention after and before so much that is worth admiring, what am I doing but enjoying the privilege which belongs to presumption. But where are they? What are these people doing in the green room? Let them draw the curtain.

The curtain is drawn—suppose it is drawn—and, ladies and gentlemen, behold the spectacle. The entire fabric of the greatness of the Mahomedan nation is on a level with the ground. It has fallen to pieces—literally to pieces. Consider the labour, the energy, the skill it must have cost our ancestors, and pay, I pray you, the tribute of a moment's thought to the labourers who reared that fabric, and who are now resting in their graves. Their handiwork, alas! did not survive them long, for there it is, almost, under your feet. A reverse of fortune is the greatest misfortune that can befall a nation; and this misfortune, which is the greatest of misfortunes, is the lot of the Mahomedan nation. But yesterday we saw them—the world saw them—in the height of glory, and to-day I see them—and you see them—in the depth of poverty and misery. Have you hearts, or have you no

hearts ? I am a Mahomedan, and I weep over the misery of my own people. I am a Hindu, and I contemplate with sympathy the present plight of a once powerful people. I am a Christian, and I shed tears—real tears—over the misery that is before me. The misery of which I speak is not an imaginary, unreal misery, a fitting theme for poets and poetical speakers. No ; nothing, I assure you, could be more real, and no reality more difficult of being dealt with. Look at the mass of impecunious Mahomedans who are awakening to the necessity of education. Look at those who have shaken off the apathy, or whatever it was, that kept them from joining the race. They now want to run the race ; but, alas ! they are too late. They want education. But education is not all they want. Where are the sinews of war ? The means of education are also wanted. Many a young man, who is now the pride of his parents—and of his parents alone—wants nothing but education to make him the pride of his people. He is born, and the parents are glad that he is born. He is a boy, and relatives rejoice that he has survived the intervening perils. He is a splendid youth—a pleasure to look at ; but what is he to us ? What is he to the nation and civilization :—

“ Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
The dark, unfathomed caves of the ocean bear  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness over the desert air.”

Gentlemen by looks, gentlemen by birth, education and education alone is wanted to make them perfect gentlemen. Consider their position. Consider the position of their parents. Themselves the relics of the generation that has passed away, they wish their children to be what they themselves were in other times. But where are the means ? Education is required, but education is not a cheap commodity. They are willing to give

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